RUSSIA IN 1916

STEPHEN GRAHAM

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RUSSIA IN 1916

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А.С. Хомяковъ

RUSSIA IN 1916

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Author of "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary," "Russia and the World," etc.

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PREFACE

I RETURNED to Russia last summer, visited as many of my old friends there as I could, arranged for the publication of some of my books in the Russian language, and incidentally travelled a great deal and saw a great many sides of Russian contemporary life, talked also with all manner of Russians.

I travelled to Bergen in Norway, from Bergen obtained a passage round the North Cape to Vardö, the last port of Norway, transhipped there to a Russian boat and sailed for Ekaterina, the first port in Russia in the North, the new Russian harbour which never freezes. From Ekaterina I went on to Archangel, where I stayed a week, and from Archangel went to Moscow. I visited some estates in Central Russia and stayed with various acquaintances and friends, visited Rostof-on-the-Don, the Caucasus, Orel, Petrograd, and finally came back to England on a returning ammunition ship.

PREFACE

In going to Russia I certainly did not intend to publish my impressions in book form, but I have been asked to do so, and I recognise the value of keeping in contact with our Ally from day to day. The requirement of the moment seems to be not so much books on Russia, of which there are now a great many, but diaries or volumes of impressions, keeping the peoples of the two countries in touch during the war. I returned to London at the beginning of October, 1916, and I should be glad to think that some one returning at the beginning of January, 1917, would follow on with another small volume of this type. Again for April, 1917. We need such volumes of personal impressions, and there would not be the need to apologise for them. They are letters between friends both engaged in the same vital task. It is extremely difficult to keep in touch with Russia by reading newspapers only. The newspapers are, on the whole, difficult to follow. They are concerned with the news-aspect of events and the scope for sensational appeals. Good quiet correspondence tends to be lost in them. Hence my little book of the hour.

PREFACE

I was in Russia when the war broke out in 1914. I spent 1915 in Egypt, the Balkans, Russia and England, and again I spent the summer of 1916 in Russia. I have, therefore, been in touch with the Russians all the time of the war. I hope, therefore, that in this time when deeds rather than words are necessary, my report of the conditions prevailing in the land of our ally Russia may be considered serviceable.

STEPHEN GRAHAM.

LONDON,
15 *January* 1917.

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RUSSIA IN 1916

I

A JOURNEY TO EKATERINA

I PROPOSED to go from Newcastle to Bergen, to go by Norwegian steamer from Bergen to Vardö or Kirkenaes on the far north-eastern limits of Norway, and then wait for some sort of boat to take me to Ekaterina. In this I was successful, though it was not possible to book any passage beforehand in England.

I left the night the first misleading news of the North Sea battle was received. If that news had been correct it would have meant that the German Fleet had broken through and was at large, and that each

war vessel had become a commerce trader. We stood a chance of being revised by Germans and perhaps of all English of age being taken away. A British captain said to me afterwards, "We received that first news as we were leaving a South American port with a cargo of nitre. We realised at once that the chances must now be considered against our arriving safely at a home port."

Because of the battle the mail boat which had been due in at Newcastle in the morning, arrived only at nightfall, the revising officers were late in coming from the examination of the one to the examination of the other—the *Rhanvald Jarl,* due to go out from Newcastle that night. I did not get to my cabin till half-past-one in the morning, and had spent some hours among drunken sailors, one of whom was sick on the stairs of the Aliens Officer's room.

The journey to Bergen was not pleasant. No one to breakfast, no one to lunch, no one to dinner. I doubt if any one felt in the least anxious about German cruisers or stray mines. There was other preoccupation.

At Bergen I stayed three days in a hotel. The news in the Norwegian papers did not flatter the efforts of the Allies. Explanations of the real significance of the North Sea battle began to appear, but they had the suggestion of merely trying to give a better face to what was in reality a very unpleasant happening. For the rest the Germans seemed to be going ahead, and had captured the fort of Vaux. The only set-off against these things was the first intelligence of the Russian advance in Galicia.

I sailed northward in the *Vesteraalen,* the Norwegian mail boat going to far Kirkenaes. Boats go four or five times a

week the whole distance of the Norwegian coast. They are slow, but, if time is no object, it is a most interesting journey—the placid fiords and jolly channels between mountains, the veritable gates in the rocks which upon occasion you pass through, the many fishing villages and the trawlers weighed down with herrings, the busy women with their knives cleaning the fish and emptying barrelful after barrelful of entrails into the sea, the thousands of gulls ever calling, dipping, screeching, chasing one another, and then the Lofoten Islands with their mighty heights, the increasingly stern more northern aspect of Nature, and the dwellings of man, the passing of the Arctic line, the brilliant nights with the sun still on the shoulder of the sky at midnight.

I fell in with an English Consul, a young man going to Vardö to do special work in connection with the war. He was accom-

panied by his wife, and she, for her part, had never been out of England before. At every place the steamer stopped we got out and went for a walk—sometimes for ten minutes, sometimes for an hour or so, according to the extent of the cargo that had to be discharged or taken on.

At Hammerfest, the most northern town in Europe, dirty snow still lay on the edges of the streets. A wild place this Hammerfest, apparently all men and no women, the roadway thronged with hardy sailors. A whole forest of masts in the harbour, an all-pervading smell of cod liver oil in the town, a grey and ugly port in June, whatever it may be later on.

Many Norwegians spoke English, though with an American accent, and they were very friendly to us. I was interested, too, to observe their love of their own land, a real attachment to the rocks of Norway.

It is majestic scenery all the way from Bergen to the North Cape, and it has somewhat of the characteristic melancholy of the North. If Russians lived in this land they would love it for its sadness. But the Norwegians love its ruggedness, and they say that the wild and rugged nature of their land has made them what they are. And I suppose Scots would find there grandeur and the sublimity of Nature.

After the North Cape we entered a region of utter desolation, the coast a line of snow, the sea grey and dead with the occasional black back of a porpoise showing. The wind was cold and wintry. We knew that at Vardö we should find no flowers, no vegetation.

At Vardö I left the boat as I had discovered that boats went to and fro to Russia therefrom. An important place this Vardö, and a sharp look-out on Germans should al-

ways be kept here. If a submarine campaign against the shipping of Archangel broke out, there would probably be some connivance on the part of Germans or neutrals resident hereabout, and possible bases on this desolate coast.

A most forlorn region subject to terrific gales, cold and snowy. It has a great number of grey wooden docks with grey fishing-boats; almost all the houses are of wood, and are of the same grey complexion as boats and quays, they are low and squat, and the dirty streets are wide. Innumerable gulls are diving and dipping and fluttering—and shrieking in chorus.

There are two hotels. One is called appropriately "The North Pole," the other is "Vinnans Hotel." I stayed at the latter, and this, astonishing to relate, is a first-class hotel with electric light and a telephone in every room, though there is no one

in the town with whom you can communicate. There is an electric arrangement on the wall for lighting your cigarette—you press a button and a disc becomes red-hot, and at that you light up. I suppose some Christiania contractor had put this up, faithful to the specification quoted in his tender. My windows had scarlet blinds, and all night long the midnight sun poured crimson light on my white bed, the huge wind howled and bellowed, and innumerable gulls cried up and down, now this side, now that.

In the bleak and lonely cemetery are Russian graves with naïve carvings of the Virgin and Child on the orthodox wooden crosses. Many a Russian sailor and fisherman has perished on this side of his fatherland.

There are amusements in the town, two cinema shows packed every night, a shoot-

ing saloon, an Aunt Sallie shy called "Amerikanske Sport." I hit down one ugly face and received as a reward a post-card picture of a pretty Norwegian girl about to give a kiss to her beau; there are band-of-hope meetings with the most excruciating music, and you see advertised—raffles.

One day fifteen negroes arrived on a boat from Russia. They were the crew of the American ship *R*—— which had brought ammunition to Archangel, but was in such a bad condition that the negroes refused to take it back, got their money and cleared off. At Vardö one of them had quarrelled with the rest and was now said to be mad. No one would take him in, all the girls being frightened, and the children aiming stones at him. He was accommodated in the gaol.

At Vardö there is a most able Russian

Consul who is not only most useful to his own Government, but also to ours, affording him all the help he can. And a Russian knows more of this neighbourhood and its phenomena than an Englishman brought from Christiania or London. Through him I learned that a boat would soon be sailing for Alexandrovsk, the harbour of Ekaterina, and after a five-days' stay at Vardö I got away.

Over the sea once more! In twelve hours I was at the Russian Monastery of Petschenga, and next day in a big snow-storm I came to the new harbour.

II

THE DARK HAVEN

FROM the end of November to the middle of January the sun does not rise in Russia's new haven. All would be dark even at mid-day were it not for the snow. The stars never set. The lights in the little wooden dwellings are never put out. Great gales blow, rolling up mountainous waves on the Arctic. Or Polar mists swallow up everything. Snowstorms go on indefinitely and the frost may be forty degrees, fifty degrees. Here is no town, no civilisation. Alexandrovsk has no pavement, no high street, no cinema theatre, no hotel, not even a tavern. Its population is hard, gloomy, northern. No one has any intelligence of

the great world far away to the south—the gaze is toward the North Pole.

They say it has a great future. 'Twill be a mighty city with roaring traffic and skyscrapers, theatres, cafés, passion, and sin. It will be the Odessa of the North. Valery Brussof anticipates such a city in one of his fantastic stories—Zvezdny, the capital of the Southern Cross Republic, and as we read we ask—"Could it be? Could such a place ever come to be?"

In any case, in the midst of this great destructive war one piece of constructive work is in hand, the fashioning of a new port for Russia far within the Arctic circle. We hear little of the work in England, or we hear laconic accounts, such as: "A branch of railways has been built on from Archangel to an ice-free port farther north, kept open by the Gulf Stream," which is inaccurate as regards the route of the railway

and, moreover, gives the impression that such a railway is easily built, might, in fact, be improvised. But in truth it is not so trivial a matter. The nearer you get to the actual place the more astonished you are to recollect the airy opinions you heard expressed in Fleet Street at home.

The harbour of Ekaterina, on which stand the town of Alexandrovsk and the barracks of Semionova, is a queen of harbours, a marvellous natural refuge, certainly no makeshift place. And then, as a glance at the map will convince, it is not near Archangel, least of all by land. No railway could ever go direct from Alexandrovsk to Archangel, and no railway of any kind could easily or rapidly be built over a thousand miles of *tundra*.

Those Russians who live in the north are in raptures over their new port. Russia shall face north, the whole of North Russia

shall be functionised in Alexandrovsk and Archangel. And, indeed, the longer the war lasts the better for this northern region materially. If the war lasts three years longer Russia will certainly finish up in possession of a new port and a valuable railway.

An enormous undertaking this, of trying to plant a railway on the *tundra*. Many have died at work on it; hundreds must inevitably die before it is a *success*. It was difficult to engineer. Russians say now that it was badly surveyed to start with and needs re-planning, but in any case it was extremely difficult to find a way over the mosses and morasses and along the shores of the almost continuous lakes that lie between Kola and Kandalaksha. The map of the railway is now published in Norway and Sweden. It might just as well be made accessible to the English Press. When Lord

Kitchener died, maps showing his route were printed in our papers as if he had been going to Alexandrovsk (which was not the case) to travel on a railway which was not in existence to Archangel! This caused much amusement in Russia.

As a matter of fact, the railway runs from Semionova across the Kola peninsula to the White Sea at Kandalaksha, and then becomes practically a coast railway to the little port of Kem. Thence there is a good railway to Petrozavodsk and Petrograd. It does not come near Archangel. Indeed, if the formation of this new harbour and railway should be a practical success, Archangel is almost bound to suffer and to relapse from its present state of prosperity to its former somnolence.

The railway when completed will be a memorable and valuable achievement. It has taken an enormous amount of labour to

construct. First, Russian gangs were set to work and then they were called to fight for their country. A Canadian contractor or contracting company was then successful in obtaining the work. But the workmen sent over found themselves confronted by conditions that were necessarily difficult to have realised in advance. They faced the problem in a commercial rather than in a military spirit. And when they had gone there was almost as much work in prospect as when they came.

Their place was largely taken by Austrian prisoners who had volunteered from their internment camps to come out and work for a wage. The estimate of the numbers thus employed ranges from 10,000 to 20,000 men. They were guarded by Cherkesses, troops from the Caucasus who presumably had also volunteered, since military service was not obligatory for them. The Austri-

ans worked well and did some of the best work on the railway. But there was considerable suffering. Now 10,000 Chinamen, Kirghiz, and Mongols of various kinds are at work.

In the summer, except for water under foot and mosquitoes in the air, the conditions are good, but in the winter all the men are working with torches in the darkness. Despite much forethought on the part of the Government many of the men have proved to be yet too thinly clad to withstand the great frosts. The food from a European point of view is coarse. Yet the work must go on, must be done. This year, before the spring, one engine covered the whole of the course of the railway—one only—and then the thaw came and enormous stretches of the track fell away, were washed off, disappeared.

The Austrians were reported to have laid

the sleepers purposely on lumps of ice. When the thaw came they floated off. But in truth there was nothing much but ice to lay them on. The Canadians, working with torches in the darkness, were said to have failed to fix the rails with the right balance on the sleepers and the first engine that passed over worked havoc with the embankment. So they say in Alexandrovsk, but, probably, neither Austrians nor Canadians were to blame—but Nature simply had not yet been conquered, though there was a semblance of conquest at the end of the winter.

In the autumn of 1915 Archangel froze unexpectedly early, and vessels that could not discharge there went to Alexandrovsk to wait for the railway. Ekaterina was packed with ships—you could almost step from one ship to another and thus get across from one side of the harbour to another.

And as there were no rings for the moorings of the ships there was a certain amount of fear that a storm might arise and the ships dash themselves to bits against one another. But, as it proved, no matter how fierce the tempest raged outside, this virginal harbour was always placid.

Towards Christmas (one party on Christmas Eve) arrived our armoured-car men, now fighting so gallantly with the Grand Duke in Transcaucasia, telegraphists who erected the wireless stations, naval airmen, troops. Men-of-war guarded the harbour. In that strange Arctic refuge, what an assembly of British! They remained all the winter and thought this Russia they had come to the most God-forsaken place in the world. Nevertheless, they named the only street of Alexandrovsk "Pall Mall" and at their concerts they sang incessantly some song about "Leicester Square, Leicester

Square." One might think Leicester Square was really an important place in the minds of Englishmen.

One obtains the idea that it is perhaps the Mecca to which the British soldier turns, and some of the Russian soldiers who are fighting "to put the Cross on Sancta Sophia" have a vague idea, hearing our armoured-car men singing, that perhaps we are fighting to get back to Leicester Square. Their marching songs are folk-lore airs with national words. A contrast to our music-hall songs imported from America.

On English Old-Year's night, which is a fortnight before the same date in Russia, the men on the ships decided to celebrate the coming of the New Year with festivity. The Russians ashore peacefully slept and the great gloomy cliffs that close the harbour in were silent as the grave. Suddenly from all the ships burst forth cries and fire-

works and rockets, songs, shoutings. The Russians ashore all wakened up and thought the Germans had come.

This Ekaterina is a great sight, a most beautiful place, though forbidding and austere, a symmetrical, flask-shaped exit from the Arctic. In the storm of driving mist and snow it was difficult enough finding the neck of the flask, the way in; but once in, all was peace, though the storm raged in the heavens and in the air. There were no ships to speak of in the harbour then, but a good deal of life on the shore, especially at Semionova.

A tatterdemalion Russian population, some in sheepskins, some in Caucasian *bourkas,* some in bowler hats, some in old khaki overcoats, and smoking pipes—evidence of English influence. There were engineers in leather jackets and with flannel bashleeks over their heads, workmen in felt

boots, many Circassian troops with their rifles and in ragged uniforms, men with pale, severe faces—they make probably the most terrible type of Russian troops, silent, faithful, relentlessly severe and very powerful, speaking little or no Russian, Mohammedan by religion—the guards of the Austrian prisoners.

When the railway is finished its terminus will be at Semionova, and that will probably be the name of the new port. Semionova is all new, unpainted wood. Here are hundreds of shanties and barracks, and an indescribable chaos of workmen, materials, and mud. Engines puff along the shore on the bit of railway which is in working order, and on these engines the various agents and engineers clamber to go to the place of action where the gangs are at work.

I fell in with various queer people; a speculator buying up land, a one-eyed man

with smoky glasses seeking a site on which to build a cinema. Eight thousand roubles, would buy a cinema with all fixtures, including an electric piano. It was bound to be a success, he argued, for there would be no other place to go to in the long black winter. Land has been bought up all round the harbour, and by people who have never seen it—just for speculation, the curse of modern life in Russia. And all the time whilst Russian peasants and workmen are slaving and dying, comfortable commercial folk in the south are buying and selling the prospective fruits of their labour and sufferings.

Still, that is the way of the world, and these people pass, whereas the work remains. All the autumn and possibly through the winter the work goes on again in the continuous darkness, with torches, under the supervision of fur-clad engineers

and grim Cherkesses. Many will be the sufferings, though not greater than the sufferings on the field of battle. Many have died and will die in the building and consummating of the Murman railway. Still the railway will remain as a peaceful memorial, the great new railway from Petrograd to the dark haven.

III

THE NEW ARCHANGEL

WHEN I last visited Archangel, six years ago, it was a dreamy, lifeless, melancholy port. One felt that, like its sister city, Kholmagora, it had once been great, but its greatness had finally set. You could feel the melancholy of Russia there, the sadness of material failure so characteristic of the Russian soul. But to-day! To-day the vision has fled, the *tempo* has changed. All the ships of the world find anchorage in her harbour, and motley crowds throng her streets. That the war has brought about. A year before the war fifty vessels entered Archangel port. During the last twelve months something like 5000 have entered. Great liners and transports and weather-

beaten tramps and three-deck river boats stand in majestic pride. Their smoke and steam make a dome over the city of Archangel when you approach it from the north.

There are Norwegians and Yankees, with their colours flamboyantly painted on their bows to warn the submarine off; Russians and French, with their tricolours streaming; but most of all English ships, with their proud rain-washed Union Jacks lolling in the wind. I was taken through the whole harbour in a little, arrow-like steam launch—from the Thames! How often it had shot under the arches of our little bridges, and now it was puffing and panting on the vast brown Dvina, be-dwarfed by huge ships, driven by a Lett from Riga, and constantly going short of steam and getting becalmed far from either shore.[1] Besides

[1] Thirteen lines excluded by British Censor. Not to be published.

troops, the French are taking great quantities of alcohol used in the manufacture of high explosives, and I saw many barges heaped up with barrels of spirit and wondered if there were many leaks. The Russian manufacture of alcohol has probably not diminished as a result of the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors in Russia, but has proved to be a valuable war export. This fact is especially important to take into consideration with regard to Russian temperance reform. When the war is over and the market for this alcohol is partially lost, will there not be another movement of resistance on the part of the manufacturers?

I saw all manner of crates with machinery, parts of aeroplanes, and the like, and British vessels discharging these things, and I saw grain and flax and timber going on for us from Russia.

Go into the chief restaurant of Arch-

angel, and as like as not all the customers are English captains, and they are reading back numbers of the *Daily Mail* and talking "ship." At the Café Paris there is a "skippers' table," where they are also captains all, and the waitresses quarrel as to who shall serve there, though none of them knows two words of English. In the Alexandrovsky Gardens you see English sailors with Russian girls, and neither can say a word to the other. Their only language is that of looks. One of our men showed me a card with poetry written and violets painted and asked me to translate the words for him and write an answer. It ran something like this—

What need for words when without them you are so eloquent?
Why should the lips move
When the eyes speak so well?

Sailors tell wonderful stories of feminine

conquests, and it is evident the Russian girls are partial to them. Even at the theatre, in front of you are sitting such unlikely persons as a fireman and a stoker, and one says to the other with disgust, "I can't understand a blooming word. Can you?" Some Englishmen have exercise books with Russian words and phrases laboriously copied out—an impossible language!

All is going well in Archangel. The Russians, in spite of their inexperience, are handling the immense quantities of materials well, and the "stuff" is all steadily proceeding to the places where it is most needed. New quays have been built, and loops of railway run along them, and some ships, carrying nothing weighing less than three tons, yet discharge all their immense articles of cargo in considerably less time than it took to put them on at Liverpool

or Dundee or Newcastle as the case may be.

The Russians earn unheard-of wages in the docks, and the rumour attracts thousands of workers from all parts of Russia. A journalist writing in the *Russkoe Slovo* in July called it the Russian Klondike. All Russians who go there are pleased with it. The port in its present grandeur is a sort of promise for Russia, and it flatters her commercial future.

I was warned I should not find a room anywhere in the city, and that people paid five roubles a night for the privilege of sleeping in a passage. But I obtained a clean room at the Troitsky Hotel for 2 roubles 75 copecks, which was not dear. Notices in the room were printed both in English and Russian, indicating how many English visitors they have now.

I called on my friend Alexander Alexandrovitch Beekof, the hunter and draper

whom I described in "Undiscovered Russia." He had now opened a boot shop and was rich, selling his wares at three or four pounds the pair. He was proud of his business success and rejoiced in the independence which it gave him. He is now a member of the Gorodskaya Duma, and when a representative of the city was wanted to carry an emblem to the Archangel troops at the front, Beekof was thought to be the best.[1] He shared the hardships of the common soldiers, and was fain to stay at the front, but was mixed up in the great retreat from Austria and felt very sick of everything before he got back to his native city and the bootshop.

Since I was in Archangel last the young revolutionary exile Alexey Sergeitch, now pardoned and married and teaching history in Moscow, has brought out a little book on

[1] Four lines excluded by Censor.

the Monastery of Ci. I saw him later when I got to Moscow.

I was invited by the town council to partake of a glass of tea on the occasion of the opening of the electric tramway. All the notables of the town were accommodated on board a special steamer, and went slowly along the Cathedral pier a mile or so to the new electric power station. Here priests met us with banners and ikons and holy water. A service was held in the power station, and the smell of burning incense mingled strangely with the smell of new paint and oil and machinery. Holy water was flung in all corners and over our heads, and then the dynamos were set in motion and the whole place buzzed and groaned. I think Repin, the engineer, proud of having constructed the most northern tramway in the world, was a little anxious lest the holy water should spoil his engines.

But all went well, and we took our seats in the virgin trams to make the first journey, all the notables of the town and with them every beggar and labourer and tatterdemalion dock-hand that could get a footing. In Germany I can imagine how swiftly these gentlemen would have been dealt with. But in Russia "all is permitted" and we had a joy-ride. We went cheerfully along on our parade journey. The conductresses in brand new uniforms and shining metal clips and punches stood with their money bags and their full rolls of tickets. Directly following our trip to the Town Hall the cars were open to the public, and fares would be collected. Car after car drew up and we stepped out and walked up the stone stairs to the long tables and the glasses of tea and the proud speeches of the great men of Archangel.

Now the trams are in full operation, and

bring in about £1,000 a week. Archangel is united, and friends within the city have become nearer. All day the trams carry passengers, and all night they carry goods, so I am told.

As I write of this now in the winter after I have come back to London, I imagine that probably now all is frozen over again. The brown river became white, and within twenty-four hours you could drive a horse and cart over it. It did not melt again till the spring. Captains and their crews thinking of leaving in a few days and grumbling because of small delays as they always do grumble, were suddenly condemned to remain idle for months; their ships, dotted here, there, and everywhere in the ice, had a processional aspect, and looked as if they were sailing out and yet never getting forward. The men cut pine branches and made avenues from their ships to the shores,

well-trodden roads with names. There was "Broadway" leading to a big American ship, and K—— Avenue leading to the *K*——, and R—— Avenue leading to the *R*——. I may not mention the name of any British ship, but the detail has a picturesqueness which is worth noting. The Russian Government paid the owners of these boats hundreds of thousands of roubles damages for this unexpected incursion of Jack Frost. It was highly unprofitable to Russia, but every one made the best of it and no one grumbled.

The happy co-operation of the Russians and the English shows to advantage in Archangel. Russians and English like one another and get on well together there, though the souls of the common people are so different and Russian ways so different from our own.

IV

THE COST OF LIVING

EACH time returning to Moscow I notice change. Last year after the riots it was a city of broken windows and more or less empty streets. This summer I found the life patched up and the windows more or less repaired. There were more people; there was an obvious prosperity of a kind, among the shopkeeping class. Every one talked of the dearness of living and yet every one had more money wherewith to buy. And all shops were thriving. Many shops with German names have now put up a notice to the effect that the owners are Russian. Not that the German shops which were sacked in July, 1914 have re-

covered. Einem, the great confectioner, with all his branches seems to have sold his retail business. The first-rate art shop and publishing house of Knebel & Grossman has had to obtain a Government loan in order to make a start again and supply the schools, but most precious negatives and blocks and originals perished, and it will be a long time before the firm can make up for what was lost. Many new cafés and places of amusement have been opened, testifying to the money in people's pockets. Rich fugitives from the districts conquered by the Germans and Austrians seem to have started businesses in Moscow and have imparted to it a tinge of the complexion of Warsaw—part of the extra gaiety of Warsaw seems to have arrived one notices such new names as that of the Piccadilly Café opposite Phillipof's.

Apart from that street gaiety, however,

there is sufficient sadness and anxiety in the background. As in England and France, every family has its personal stake in the war, and for many that stake has become the wooden cross over a grave. Young and splendid regiments are still to be seen marching, however, and to look at them in their new uniforms one might think for a moment that it was only the beginning, Russia was entering the war, and no one had yet been lost.

There is engaging enthusiasm still, and withal the noted Slav patience that does not ask for things to be done quickly. A slow war in many respects suits the Russian temperament. The most characteristic thing in Russia is the waiting: waiting hours for your ticket at the booking-office, waiting hours for Chinovniks, waiting for one's money at the bank, waiting for a turn to buy a seat for next week's performance at the

theatre, whole days if Shaliapin be going to sing. And now they are waiting with their accustomed cheeriness and patience.

Certainly they have their hardships, those who dwell in the background. They have plenty of subjects for grumbling and complaints. Their talk is all of the terrible *dorogovizna.* The pretty word *dorogovizna* means dearness of living, and it is the commonest in the townsman's vocabulary this season of the war. The price of nearly every commodity in Russia has doubled or trebled since the outbreak of war. One would expect the price of manufactured goods to rise there; but the surprising phenomenon is that, despite the overwhelming abundance of foodstuffs in Russia and Russia's inability to export any of that abundance, food has become, on the whole, dearer than in Berlin. The *Russian Word* has a long list of comparative prices, show-

ing that out of sixteen common articles of food ten have increased more in price in Moscow than in Germany. The price of mutton has increased 180 per cent. in Berlin, but it has increased 281 per cent. in Moscow; pork 114 per cent. in Berlin, 142 per cent. in Moscow; white bread 27 per cent. in Berlin, 45 per cent. in Moscow; sugar, 27 per cent. in Berlin, 57 per cent. in Moscow, and so forth. Sugar has in many districts disappeared entirely, and shop windows exhibit the notice "No sugar whatever," which means not even the dirty brown soft sugar which has displaced the *rafinade*. At Archangel there is a fixed allowance of 1 lb. of sugar per person per month, and that is only accessible for settled inhabitants. As a visitor I was lucky to purchase twenty-four lumps at a halfpenny a lump. At the railway stations at many buffets you are offered sugar candy

or raspberry drops with your tea, or a wrapped caramel with your coffee. In cases where they have sugar the waiters have the audacity to put it in for you, lest you should secrete what you did not want. Now cards have been introduced for sugar almost everywhere, even in the villages. The possession of a card entitles you to purchase the article specified on it. At first receiving the food card the heart rejoices. But it is one thing to possess a card and another to find a grocer who has anything to sell. If we introduce cards in England we shall probably experience the same anomaly, though we have certainly more gift for organisation than the Russians. For food tickets to be a success an extraordinary thoroughness in administration is necessary and also a good social conscientiousness on the part of individuals.

When the blue food cards were dis-

tributed in one village a rumour spread that the Anti-Christ had arrived in Russia and was giving these out. It is said that one inhabitant of foreign origin bought up all the cards from the peasants at a low price, and they now contentedly buy their provisions from him when he has them.

Meat has so risen in price that throughout all Russia four meatless days have been proclaimed, and on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday you must keep to vegetables, fish, or fowls. On these days no meat may be sold and no cattle may be slaughtered. The meat may not be sold in a smoked state nor as sausage. When this measure was introduced the butchers wailed, if the cows and the calves rejoiced. The chickens suffered for it. But ask a Russian, and he will tell you all suffer for it. The price of vegetables has risen, the price of meat on the days when you buy it

has risen, the price of fish and fowl has risen. One day at the National Hotel in Moscow I noticed cauliflowers standing at the superb price of 3 roubles, 50 copecks, about 5*s*.

From scores of districts in Russia petitions have been sent to Petrograd—Cancel the regulations as to meatless days. But the regulations are not likely to be cancelled. At the restaurants such small portions are given that it is difficult to make a good meal even at large expense. And the soups which are made without meat are the same price as they used to be when meat was allowed. It seems that if meatless days are to be introduced in Britain it will not be merely one a week for it is always possible to buy meat for two days. They should be for three or four days a week as in Russia. But phenomena similar to those I noted will be repeated with us. Vegetables will rise

rapidly in price as a result of meatless days.

Sugar has disappeared because the Germans and Austrians are in possession of some of the richest beetroot country of Russia, and also of several sugar factories. Coffee is scarce because there is war with Turkey; butter and eggs because the peasants, being unable to obtain vodka, have no particular use for extra cash, and won't sell their products. Speculators are holding large quantities of provisions in ice-houses and waiting till the prices are pushed higher and higher. The banks are holding quantities of sugar. There are many explanations.

In one window in Moscow is exhibited a notice, "Soap is received daily and is sold in lumps of not less than 10 lb. up to 10 A. M."; in other windows is the notice, "No soap," and one involuntarily recalls that piece of nonsense—

A great she-bear passing down the street. What, no soap; and so she married the barber,

in which some Mrs. Gallop might read an occult reference to the Russia of these days.

Boots have become difficult to buy. Existing supplies are nearly exhausted. In a boot-shop window in Moscow one pair of boots exhibited—the last. Second-hand boots are valuable. Boot thieves have appeared in the hotels, and a new notice has appeared in your room, "You are requested not to put your boots out at night." My friend Beekof, of Archangel, made a huge pile of money selling boots. I met him lately in Moscow where he has been purchasing expensive works of art, and even thinks of buying an original Levitan. Boots are too expensive to buy. They say plaited birchbark or lime-bark boots, which used to be sold for 2*d.* a pair in the country, now fetch 5*s.* Peasants are sitting

plaiting boots on suburban stations and selling them as fast as they make them. Repairs are so expensive that a parlourmaid spent a month's wages on having her boots mended. Happily the town councils have fixed a tariff in Moscow and Petrograd at last, both for boots and for repairs.

Russian houses are heated with wood, and strange to say, in the midst of her enormous forests she is short of wood. Wood has doubled and trebled in price. The poor people must freeze. There are not working hands to cut wood—so many having been taken for more profitable occupations. I have been asked a shilling for a packet of rubbishy envelopes. Paper is very dear—some of the best Russian paper mills are in the hands of the enemy. All metal articles are expensive. A decent samovar costs 50 to 60 roubles. There is said to be famine in medicine, and the chem-

ists' supplies are short. Certainly the Russians seem to be enjoying better health on the whole.

They say all is going to be regulated. The Government is going to take charge of the whole business of supply and there will be cards for everything, and you must call at the grocer and present your card. Once more calls and cards, and cards and calls. But our Russian friends are the most unpractical people. You see every day in Moscow queues a street long, waiting hours with cards in their hands, waiting for a pound or so of sugar. Such queues turned up at the butchers' shops on the mornings of the meat days that the butchers decided to issue tickets the day beforehand—on each ticket a number designating your turn to buy meat on the morrow. Thus recently 2,000 waited on Arbat from 4 P. M. to midnight for a ticket for a turn next day. The vege-

tarian propagandist turns up to look at their solemn faces. "Is it worth it?" he asks. Happy vegetarians!

"But you know if I don't get meat my stomach will go wrong," says a Russian plaintively.

"What is tea without sugar?" says another. "And what is life without tea?"

Another comes to the doctor and says, "Prescribe, if you please. I've lost my appetite. I can't eat."

And the doctor replies, like that friend of Carlyle—

"My dear fellow, it isn't of the slightest consequence."

"The Army has meat, tea, sugar, white bread?"

"Yes, the Army has all these in plenty."

"Slava Tebye Gospody! That's all right."

V

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

FROM Moscow I journeyed to see some friends of the artist Pereplotchikof, the E. family, on a small estate in the Government of Voronezh. At the small wayside station an unfamiliar figure greeted me—this was an Austrian prisoner, a Hungarian who could not speak a word of Russian. He was the new coachman, and would drive me the ten miles to the farm. The former coachman has gone to the war, and so now an Austrian prisoner, in the same uniform in which he surrendered and wearing the familiar high military hat, is doing his work. He carried my bags from the station, for there was no porter, and put them

in the carriage, and then drove me on through verdant forest and along the terrible road deep in liquid mud and water.

A great feature of the new country life in Russia is the Austrian prisoners at work. One seldom comes across any Germans. But of Austrians there are great numbers. They volunteer to go out to work, rather than remain in the internment camps. In order to obtain Austrian prisoners to work on an estate you apply to the government town, and they are hired out to you at eight roubles a month, four roubles of which are allowed to be deducted for keep. It turns out that on the whole the prisoners work merely for board and lodging and what would keep an ordinary smoker in tobacco. Prisoner labour is altogether cheaper than that of ordinary Russian labourers. So if you can get a strong detachment of prisoners on your estate you are somewhat advan-

tageously circumstanced. No guards, however, are supplied with the prisoners, and you are held responsible for them in case they attempt to escape. The prisoners on the land are generally those who were agriculturists in their native Austria and they are highly serviceable. They do not take their new duties too seriously, but all the same do more work than the average hired Russian labourer would do. To work is more pleasant to them than to sit together and talk or sing, and their industrious habits are a matter of pleasant surprise for their employers.

On Mme. E.'s estate the prisoners were Hungarians. She knew no Hungarian, they no Russian, and no grammars or dictionaries of the Hungarian language were obtainable in Moscow or Petrograd—the only aid to learning the language which Mme. E. was able to obtain was an officer's

war guide containing maps, geographical details, and five or six pages of military phrases with translations. Even so, good progress was being rapidly made in mutual understanding. These Hungarians will carry back to their own country many funny-sounding Russian words, and on the other hand some Hungarian expressions may remain locally.

Certainly the prisoners are of great economic aid to Russia. Each Austrian captured is not only one Austrian less in the enemy ranks, but one harvester more to take in the precious grain. The Russian women, the old men and the children, seem to be insufficient to keep up the present extent of cultivation and to reap the harvest—the labour of the prisoners makes up the deficiency.

In many respects the prisoner of this foreign element in the midst of Russian

country life is sufficiently objectionable from the Russian point of view. There are said to have been a number of marriages, though the difference in religion must have precluded the possibility of legal marriage in most cases where it may have been desired.

There is a cloud over the village, and it cannot be said that the war is popular among the women. They want the men back; the wives want their husbands, the girls want their sweethearts. Girls of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen are persistently gloomy. They feel that time is slipping past without bringing the necessary bridegroom. They should have been betrothed and married by now. Nineteen is a dreadful age for an unmarried girl—she feels herself already an old maid, and is disinclined to tell her age. Pretty Tania the serving-maid does not look so

pretty this year; she has let the fact that she is eighteen prey upon her mind. She knows that when the boys come back they will not look at any one so old as she, and she will be left.

On festival nights there is the same singing in the village street, the parade of village fashions, but somehow it is rather meaningless since there are no male partners and no weddings can be arranged. Letters of course go to and fro between the Army and the village, but the soldier does not write to "his sweetheart," or if he does it is because his sweetheart is his wife. For long engagements do not take place in the country. Queer letters the soldiers send back, full of greetings to neighbours and relatives, and containing little or nothing about the war. There is never any need to censor them. The peasant wives bring their letters to Mme. E. and she reads them

aloud. Or they come to her when they want to write their letters, for though most of the men can read and write, the women seldom are able.

My hostess was delightful with the peasants. She has taught among them, nursed them, cared for them, and understands their souls. She sits with pen and paper on the sunny verandah of the big sunny house and writes at dictation whilst the peasant wife, with her hands dangling at her side, maunders on about the cow, the hole in the roof which needs mending, the state of the crops, little Willie's health, the amount of work these Austrian prisoners do, and so on. She puts down literally what the *baba* says, as if she were doing an exercise in phonetics, and never corrects a word or a wrong expression or a grammatical error. The consequence is that the soldiers at the other end actually hear their wives speak-

ing to them, and highly appreciate it. The letters which Mme. E. writes for the wives are the best.

Still, letters are makeshift ways of talking to one's nearest, and it is a great day in the village when a soldier actually returns, a wounded man invalided back or a man with some sort of message. Alas, Russian troops get very little "leave" whilst they are well. It often happens that from the day of mobilisation to the peace day when the men come home, nothing is seen or heard of the common soldier—especially when he cannot write. Lists of casualties in the ranks are not published, and the village has to wait patiently to know whom it has lost and who are saved. More attention is paid to officers, even to ensigns, and I met down here in Voronezh Province a private who had been sent from the front to convey to the home people the decora-

tions and last tidings of a young ensign who had perished leading his men. This officer had been greatly beloved by the soldiers—they rushed to him when he fell, and he seemed merely to be asleep. But one bullet had gone through his mouth and two through his skull. He was given the Cross of St. George after his death, and a soldier was detached to carry the last honours home and tell the tale of his death. Incidentally the soldier brought to the village his story of the war.

A rainy summer in the village. In many places the priests prayed for the rain to stop. The hay rotted where it lay, and could not be taken in, but the wheat and the rye were good everywhere. And the fruit harvest was good. Some one made a handsome profit on apples, since the common price in Moscow was threepence or fourpence apiece. Despite the dearth of sugar,

jam-making was carried on in the country to an even greater extent than usual. People felt that it was a good way to save sugar for the winter, to put it into jam. Russian jam is much sweeter than ours, and is often put in tea as a syrup. It is never spread on bread and butter. Mme. E. obtained several sacks of soft sugar, about three hundredweight in all, and the half of that she used for making jam.

The orchard's fruit, however, had been sold in advance in the spring. An Armenian had come, considered the blossom, and offered a price which was accepted. He had made a good speculation as it turned out, and he put a watchman in among the trees with a dog to see that nothing was stolen. The watchman was one of the unfortunate refugees from the territory now occupied by the Germans. Two years ago he had been a prosperous

farmer with his own land and horses and cows and what not, now he is a miserable half-savage in sheepskins lying in a rain-soaked straw shelter in the orchard—sans land, sans wife, sans everything. A Roman Catholic he, but he went to the Orthodox Church on Sunday, as did also the Hungarian prisoners, for they said in their halting way what it is difficult for the more prosperous to understand, that *Bog odin,* God is One, and that if there be no Catholic church by, it is as easy to pray to God in the church that there is.

VI

FATHER YEVGENY

THE faces in the passing crowd are always somewhat of an enigma. There are so many that we do not know, each with his own wide story, which, however, does not touch our story. One is tempted to go up and place the hand in the slightly unwilling and doubtful hand of the stranger and say, "I know you, do I not?" And it is always somewhat of a miracle if in the midst of the sea of faces there suddenly turns up the familiar face. There happened to me when I returned to Moscow after my stay at Mme. E.'s a miracle of this kind. I met one of my pilgrims again, one of those I accompanied to Jerusalem five years ago,

whom I did not expect to see again—the aged hermit Yevgeny.

I passed and repassed him twice, and he for his part stopped and seemed to be vaguely wondering what he should do next. 'Twas outside the Yaroslavsky station, and I was hurrying to catch a suburban train to visit some friends. There was a great swirl of traffic, and many trams were circling and groaning, emptying and receiving passengers.

"Father Yevgeny," said I. "Do you not recognise me?"

He seemed taken aback, and shrank rather as if the devil had taken a new form to tempt him. I recalled that he was considerably troubled by the devil.

"We met at Jerusalem, did we not?" said I. "Don't you remember, we used to read the Bible together in the mornings?"

Then he recognised me, and a bright and

happy smile transfigured his pallid, wrinkled cheeks and sunken eyes.

He lifted up his bent shoulders and kissed me, first on one cheek, then on the other, and proclaimed in a loud voice, "God has done this. It is a miracle. He meant that we should meet again. But how changed you are! You have grown taller. Yes, it is you. But it is a miracle. God has done it."

We were a strange contrast. I in a light summer suit and wearing a straw hat; he, in any case a remarkable figure, tall though drooping, with yellowish-white ancient locks and toothless gums. Several people stopped to look at us, and some approached more closely to hear what we were talking about. The representatives of two contrary worlds seemed to have met, for I clearly belonged to that gay, worldly, commercial Moscow which is so out of touch

with Holy Russia, and the monk was one of those forbidding figures one would not expect to smile and be demonstrative in the public street.

I wrote him my address, and he promised to come to me on the morrow. I then sped on to catch the train, my heart full of delight at this surprising meeting, this true miracle to which the bright Sunday had given birth.

Next day Yevgeny came to the hotel at which I was staying and asked for me. He had put on for the occasion an old straw hat and over it a surprisingly old and dirty Egyptian sun-helmet. In his hand he bore a tall cypress staff with a cross on the top, a true palmer's staff, but a rare enough sight in Moscow.

The porter of the hotel is artificially made fat like a swell coachman, and he wears in his hat a circle of tips of peacock-feathers

which make him look very grand. It is his business to know every one who goes in and out of the great hotel. Probably for the first time in his experience a monk made to enter the establishment. Father Yevgeny and he—again two worlds confronting one another.

"No. 214 on the second floor," said the respectful man in charge of keys and correspondence.

"This way!" said a small boy, pointing to the lift.

But old Yevgeny had never been on a lift in his life.

"My sinful old legs will carry me up," said he—he mounted the many stretches of broad carpeted stairway to the second floor, which is really the third. There was a timid knock at my door, and my visitor had arrived.

"Father Yevgeny!" I cried.

I showed him his portrait in my book, and translated aloud the chapter written there about him. He seemed to be extremely pleased. We considered the portraits of the other pilgrims in turn. Abraham, who had been twenty times to Jerusalem, was of a Cossack family. The man carrying the lantern designed for the holy fire was now dead. The priest standing beside the dead pilgrim in the picture was now at Troitskaya Lavra. I made Father Yevgeny a present of the volume, and he bade me write in it in Russian, "To the hermit Yevgeny of Mount Athos."

"How is it you come to be in Moscow and not at Mount Athos?" I asked.

"The war prevented me. I had come back to Russia to visit my native village before I died, and whilst I was here the war broke out. I was hastening back, but our Moscow Metropolite put his hand on my

head one Sunday after morning service and said, 'Thou art thinking of going to Afon—wait, do not go.' Then war with Turkey commenced, and the way was stopped. Good Father Philaret of the Bogoyavlensky Monastery gave me shelter, and that is where I am living now."

He recounted how, when the war broke out, he had a vision. He looked up into the sky, and it was filled with little white clouds hurrying southward. He was mistaken in thinking them clouds; he saw later that they were in fact the hosts of the angels ranging themselves on the side of Serbia to save her from the Austrians.

Yevgeny and I spent the whole day together. In the evening I had to leave Moscow, and he saw me off at the station. He talked a great deal about his visions. For instance, he had seen the Kingdom of Heaven. One sunny afternoon in the mon-

astery yard he fell into a trance, and in the trance he saw what he had wanted to see all his life—a vision of the Kingdom. "There are really four heavens," said he. "The first is so splendid, so full of light, that it is almost impossible to look at it; and in the midst of the light sit the Holy Trinity. Round and round them all the while and for ever the cherubs keep moving and they sing oi-oi-oi-ei-ei-ei-ai-ai-ai . . . and never cease for a moment. In the second heaven I saw the apostles and the prophets. In the third heaven were the holy *ugodniki,* and in the fourth were a great crowd of all sorts and conditions of men and women all in white. There were many, many of our Russians there—I was so glad, so full of joy that I went. And then suddenly it all vanished, and I found myself in the monastery yard and on my knees, and my hands were on the white head of an old, old pil-

grim woman. I asked her if she had seen anything, but she had seen nothing."

I asked Father Yevgeny about the Mount Athos heresy, and the Name-of-Godites, as the heretics were irreverently called. I had a faint suspicion that Yevgeny might be one of them. But he was very robustly against them. "It all sprang from one man who was himself illiterate," said he. "He held that as the Three were One, therefore Jesus and God were one and the same, and that in the beginning Jesus made the heavens and the earth. And he got a great following among the Russian monks. But he was altogether in the wrong, and if he had read he would have understood that Jesus the Son of God was born in the fulness of time, and the Name of God must therefore have priority. Ah! now they have all confessed they were wrong, and have been pardoned."

We walked out into the Moscow streets, and all the while the old monk talked most energetically, and made astonishing gestures. One moment he saw a large triangle on a poster and spat to one side as he passed. "The symbol of the masons," said he. "To-day the Cross is fighting the triangle, that is one meaning of the war. Do you know, many of the stewards of the old vodka shops were secretly masons, and it was found that they cut out on the floor underneath the shop counters, a cross—so that the drunkards might trample it under foot." Yevgeny's large intellectual face with wizened white eyebrows, and fine eyes at the bottom of caverns of wrinkled flesh, was full of animation, his gap-toothed mouth blurted the long torrent of words which it could hardly control, his long black gown from neck to ankles flapped in the wind.

I was sorry to have to part with him

again so soon. But I promised to re-find him when I returned to Moscow. He came with me to the Kursky station. "God meant that we should meet again," said he. "It was a miracle. All my life is full of miracles." He told me the miracles of his birth. His mother was one of the serfs. She married, but was eight years childless. This caused her great grief, and she did not cease to pray to God that she might bear a child. "If it be a boy, he shall be either a soldier or a monk," she promised God. Interesting that she should feel that to be a soldier was also to be consecrated to God. Yevgeny was born, and when he grew up he volunteered to be a soldier, and went to fight the Turks. He was wounded, and as he lay on the battlefield in great pain, and facing death, he promised his life to God. He then rapidly recovered, and, fulfilling his promise, entered a monastery. Since

then all his life he has allowed himself to be guided by visions and inspirations rather than by reason.

In the vague light in the train, all the passengers were quarrelling over places, and the porters were struggling with baskets and bundles. The old monk stood on the grey platform and embraced me very warmly, and then I stepped up, and the third bell tinkled and the whistle blew, and the train slowly ran out—leaving Yevgeny at the far end of the platform and the space of unoccupied rails behind the train, momentarily increasing.

VII

A RUSSIAN COUNTESS

I MADE a journey into the depths of one of the central provinces and visited Countess X. She had been in England when the war broke out, and before she could get back to Russia her husband had volunteered and had already been taken prisoner by the Germans. In her it was possible to visualise something of the personal tragedy of the war. A charming and rather beautiful woman, the war commenced when she was on the threshold of life, when, as she said, life seemed to promise so much. She is only thirty-four, and is yet white-haired and deaf and feels herself becoming older every month. "When my

husband comes back he will find me an old woman."

Both she and her husband belong to the old nobility of Russia; in the library face themselves old paintings of her ancestor and his, both conspirators in the plot to murder Paul I, both expelled from St. Petersburg of that day and ordered to live on their estates, where it is said they did not behave too sweetly to their serfs. The present Count is an idealist, an admirer of the great idealistic classics of Russian literature, a man who loves the peasants, and ordinarily spends most of his time on his estates. The Countess deplored the sort of men he would bring into dinner, knowing not the usage of the knife, drinking the water of the finger-bowls, and what-not, but country manners never touched him—he simply did not see what was being done.

When war broke out he was in such a

hurry to get to the front that he accepted a commission in some town regiment where, as a rule, the nobility do not figure, and he went forward on the great wave of Russian enthusiasm which led to Tannenberg. There he was taken prisoner with many thousand others, and was removed into the depths of Germany. As a prisoner he made an attempt to escape, but was arrested before he reached the frontier. For this offence he was put in a fortress in Saxony and confined for a long time solitarily. But he was not treated too badly by the Germans and was given pens and paper and books. He wrote to the Countess for one of my books, of which there had been considerable talk before the war. That was my "Russian Pilgrims." The Countess had bought a copy, lent it to Mme. S., who had passed it on to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and they had all found it interesting.

It was sent to Count X. in Germany and he translated it. It was rather touching from my point of view to know that a Russian prisoner had spent so many solitary hours with me, working at a book I wrote. When my "Martha and Mary" was published he had that book also sent to him and he translated it, and wrote so much about the consolation that the Countess averred she felt jealous of my name occurring so often in his letters. Unfortunately, "Martha and Mary" had already been translated.

The Countess disapproved of her husband's idealism and would rather have had him of a more careless worldly type. She craved life, not merely ideas, and was afraid that the sedentary life of her husband in the fortress would so tell on his mind that when he came back he would be less practical than ever.

"Life is going to be good," he wrote. "I have not known till now what possibilities it held, what wisdom there was in men, what beauty. All will begin again when I come back to Mother-of-God village" (the place where his land is situated). "I want to re-read all our poets. Their voices are going to sound again. Do you know Solovyof? He is wise and tender and beautiful. When I come back I will not stray from Mother-of-God village, not to Petrograd or to Moscow. But we will sit together and read Solovyof; you shall read him aloud to me and I will be content . . ."

"Ah, but I dread that," said the Countess. "I should not want to sit and read Solovyof. I want to live for my boy at least. We cannot go on living here if my boy is to be educated properly. But then —you know what Tolstoy said to women, 'Never use your influence with your hus-

bands to make them act contrary to their convictions.' Do you agree to that? I do not. I use all the influence I have.

"Life has been a great disillusion for me. It promised so much. Once I used to think there was nothing more wonderful than what life was going to bring. Now I see it is empty. There is nothing coming. Then the war goes on from week to week and month to month, interminably and without any gleam of hope of an end. It is very well to say the war will end by Christmas, next Christmas next again. I do not believe it. My boy is thirteen, delicate, enthusiastic, excitable, and already he is experiencing the emotion of love. He lost his heart lately to one of his cousins. She is twenty and is somewhat amused. The other day he picked up my hand and kissed it, which was somewhat unusual, and I turned to him. There were tears in his

eyes and he looked up at me and said, 'Ah, mother, how sorry I am it is not Vera's hand.' Galling, was it not?"

The Countess, for all her inward sadness and her deafness, was extremely vivacious, and when she did not hear she imagined what you said and was very often right. "I am sorry if sometimes I do not hear," she said. "Teach me to speak to you so that you will hear," said I, which is a simple sentence but a suggestive thought.

An interesting and sad time I spent with the Countess. Her quiet tragedy, that of being robbed of a husband and robbed of precious time, is part of the great universal tragedy of war, which touches rich and poor alike, simple and noble. The war has come athwart many promising lives in this generation and robbed the whole of the past and of the future of all mortal significance. Still, it has also given spiritual treasure in

the heart, in the soul, hidden treasure—that is what we must not overlook.

A letter which I have just received from the poor prisoner gives the following thoughts:

"Your book has changed much in my conception of life. I was too Martha. These last two years of captivity have been a pilgrimage for me though I have stayed in one place. Still I console myself by thinking that if I am suffering others also are, when I should, on the contrary, remember that what happens to me happens to no one else.

"I have just been told that my translations may not be sent out of Germany, but I hear that one book will soon appear in Russia. It will be good for Russians to read it now.

"You are right saying that we shall be mad with joy at our relief. I cannot yet

feel myself free spiritually in prison, and for me the body's freedom is still the greatest thing on earth, but I think of the day of deliverance as something so remote and so beautiful that I compare it with our resurrection from death."

VIII

RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1916

I READ, as ever, a great number of contemporary Russian books, spent many hours in bookshops, and it may not be out of place to give my impression of the literature of the hour.

Undoubtedly the great emotional impulse of the opening of the war in Russia has passed. This is reflected very clearly in current literature. The flood of printed lectures, war-pamphlets, and poems has ceased. Volumes of war stories are no longer printed, and indeed the war as a literary topic has become of minor interest. In the clearance it is now possible to observe the great desolation which the war has

wrought. There is a strange silence in Russia. What was before the war has passed; what shall be after has not begun to be. There is as yet no promise of the future anywhere.

Not that books have not been published in 1916. They have been published thickly, despite the absence of genius, the scarcity of paper, and the supposed dearth of readers. Fonvisin gets into her eighteenth thousand with "Innocent and Yet to Blame," and "The Keys of Happiness" goes into the sixth sequel. "The End of the War," a novel by Lef Zhdanof, runs through several editions. "Russian Master," an enthralling yellow-back of 470 pages by Lappo-Danilevsky, is reprinted many times. The translation of the novels of W. J. Locke flood over every bookseller's counter and railway station book-stall. New books are certainly as plentiful as ever. But they are mostly in-

terim volumes whose object is to pass the time away till the clamour of the war be over.

Gorky, who appears more and more as an editor and essayist, has issued a volume of translated Armenian literature, but he is putting forth no creative artistic work, and perhaps finds little time for it. As a reward, however, politically-minded Radical Russia certainly looks to him for light and leading. Andreef goes on writing, but seems to have fallen into minor importance. Viacheslaf Ivanof has just written an excellent book of essays on Dostoevsky, Solovyof, Tolstoy, etc., which ought to be translated into English together with his former book "From Star to Star." Artsibashef continues to write salacious stories for the Russian middle-class, and seems to reflect their life and mind. Igor Severanin is quiescent, but his latest volume of poems,

printed on bad paper, is dedicated to his "Thirteenth," by which he apparently means his thirteenth "lady friend." A curious volume lately confiscated by the police is "Father Leontius and his Lady Admirers," an account of Rasputin, written in the form of a fictitious narrative by a sufficiently serious student of sectarianism and religious phenomena—Prugavin. The society ladies circle round Leontius and cry out "Alleluia!" "Sabaoth!" "Three in One and One in Three!" which seems very shocking and novel to Russians, though it only reminds the English reader of the Agapemonites at Clapton and similar phenomena. Greater than the problem of the psychology of Leontius seems to be the problem of the psychology of the refined and normal women who can hail him as God. Lef Zhdanof's popular novel on the war is very friendly to the German people

and gives them a new chance after a political revolution. Balmont, the popular poet, has written an essay in one volume entitled "Poetry as Magic," and parts are highly reminiscent of Stevenson's "Art of Writing." He analyses the functions of the letters of the alphabet: *L* is a caress; *o* is space triumphant; *u* is the music of noise, the cry of terror; *m* is man shutting his lips, it is all the dumb can say in their anguish, etc.

Walter Pater is being translated, and seems to be appreciated by cultured Russians, though it is a pity that only fragments and not the whole of his masterpiece "Marius the Epicurean" are appearing in the collection of his works. There is certainly a great demand for English books, and our literature remains in vogue. And books about England have been appearing, the latest being Nabokof's account of his

visit with the journalists. It is somewhat inadequate as an account of England, but then it pretends to reflect only the impressions of this officially guided tour. Nabokof seems to have been greatly impressed by Sir Edward Grey as a new type of diplomatist, a man whose strength lies in the fact that he is always a gentleman and tells the simple truth. Chukovsky's book, "The Silent Ones have Spoken," on the British Tommy is popular. Incidentally it may be remarked that Chukovsky, who made such an impression in England, is a journalistic critic of a penetrative quality. His "From Chekhof to our Days," though containing some things impossible to print in English, is yet a very clever book. A new correspondent of some ability is now representing the *Russkoe Slovo* in England and giving a more representative account of our life than the old school of academic Rad-

icals who usually represent Russian newspapers abroad.

Rozanof's book on the war, "The War and the Popular Awakening," has been out of print for some time, and presumably his publisher has no paper. Novikof's popular novel on the present point of view with regard to the Revolution is also unobtainable. Many good books of previous years have not been reprinted through the dearness or scarcity of paper. On the other hand, certain more obscure publishers who have managed to hoard up paper can carry on their business in full swing. The chief commercial event of the year in the literary world has been the purchase by Seetin of the *Niva,* the extremely popular weekly. As Seetin already owns the *Russkoe Slovo* and several other papers and literary enterprises, he is becoming somewhat of a literary king, an interesting figure in modern

Russia, for he started life as a peasant, became an itinerant hawker of penny books for the people, and is now a man of great power in Russia.

M. Protopopof, now Minister of the Interior, a man of large commercial interests, is now, backed by certain banks (previously of a strong German complexion but now said to be decently metamorphosed), starting a large new Petrograd newspaper (name not yet decided). There were many blunders in the advertisement of this newspaper enterprise. It was stated that Korolinko would be editor and that Léonid Andreef and many other popular writers would contribute. But Korolenko fought shy of it and the other writers one by one disclaimed interest in the publication. Maxim Gorky was asked to edit it but found out apparently that it was not revolutionary in tendency, was capitalist rather

than labour, and that the object was international trade prosperity, and he withdrew entirely. Now A. V. Amphiteatrof, the Italian correspondent of the *Russkoe Slovo* and author of a great number of curiously interesting historical studies, is to be the editor. He is an Italophile and favours much more friendly relationship between Italy and Russia; in politics he may be said to be Radical and has got into trouble with the Government upon occasion. It will be interesting to see whether the enormous capital behind this paper will give it the chance of success that the same amount of capital behind a new paper in England would give. In Russia large capital is considered fair prey by all who can get itching fingers near it.

These notes give an indication of literary currents and tendencies in the autumn of 1916, in the midst of the war. It should

be added that, despite the great rise in prices of all things in Russia, the price of books remains almost as cheap as ever. Reading certainly increases, and consequently makes the general cost of publication less. The most characteristic of the new war phenomena of Russia is still the cry *"Gazette, Gazette!"* flung up at the trains from the fields wherever you travel. You are asked to throw your old newspapers out of the train window, that the people in the villages may read them. This cry will hardly die down when the war is over. But will the gazette satisfy? Will not books have to follow, and more substantial, better books, because of what the peasants have learned from reality? Russia is waiting for new national writers.

An interesting phenomenon in the life of contemporary Russia is the position taken

up by Maxim Gorky as a challenger of the national and traditional ideas in Russian life and literature. He has become the spokesman of a considerable number of working men and middle-class Russians, but has at the same time brought upon his head the wrath not only of old-fashioned people but of a great number of liberal and progressive thinkers. His campaign began when he returned to Russia at the beginning of 1914 and launched his attack on Dostoevsky. The war seemed to cause a lull in his activities, but last winter he resumed his verbal warfare with more energy than ever. His point of view is, that Dostoevsky is bad for Russia, because his outlook was concentrated on suffering and death. Russia must turn her back resolutely on Dostoevsky and seek life. Russia must cease to be mystical, suffering, melancholy, and must become clear-minded and

mistress of her soul. The challenge raised a great clamour. At first not many sided with him; but since the appearance of "Two Souls"[1] and "A Letter to the Reader"[2] in the journal *Lietopis* it becomes evident that he has some following. He has raised a question, and many Russians are considering it for the first time.

The Russian which Gorky attacks is just that which is spiritually interesting to us in England—the mystical and unpractical Russia. Russia on pilgrimage, artistic Russia; and that which he wants Russia to be is just what would have least spiritual interest for us—Russia optimistic, cocksure, businesslike, well-dressed, smart, and Western. He writes:

[1] "Two Souls," by Maxim Gorky. (*Lietopis,* December 1915.)

[2] "A Letter to the Reader," by Maxim Gorky. (*Lietopis,* March 1916.)

"The Russian seeking-after-God comes from an insufficiency of conviction in the force of reason—from the need of a weak man to find some guiding will outside himself.

"The turning to mysticism and romantic fantasies is a turning towards stagnation, and is contrary to the interests of a young democracy, poisoning and enfeebling it, giving it a passive attitude towards reality, and suggesting doubt in the force of reason. . . .

"The mind of the ancient East weighs most heavily and murderously on our Russian life, and has an influence immeasurably deeper on our psychology than on that of Western Europe. . . .

"We Russians have two souls; one, derived from the wandering Mongol, is that of the dreamer, mystic, idler, believer in fate; the other is the soul of the Slav, which

could burn up bravely and clearly, but cannot because of the other."

One may reasonably question the correctness of this differentiation, seeing that when we scratch a Russian we do not find a dreamer. We should be inclined to say exactly the reverse; that the gentle, dreaming, poetic soul was that of the Slav—and that Gorky would find the educated Tartar considerably nearer his ideal than any characteristic Slav.

The article entitled "Two Souls" made a considerable stir, the magazine went quickly out of print, and a great number of criticisms were made in the Press and on the platform. Their general tone was that Gorky was out of his true medium and had better go back to his art. As a result Gorky wrote "A Letter to the Reader" as a sort of collective answer to "the more

or less ironical or angry comments of my colleagues of the pen," and sarcastically quoted Lescov: "On the Russian people it is good to look from afar, especially when he prays and believes"; and he went on to excuse his being "a bad publicist" and to plead that his words should have weight as being those of one who had lived through a great deal and knew Russian life at least as well as any of his opponents.

In this reply he exhibited a rather curious attitude towards Anglo-Russian friendship which it would be well for English people to note—a belief that we seek friendship with Russia merely to exploit her materially and to keep her in a commercial bondage similar to that which she has suffered from the Germans.

"Our Russian philosophers argue in this way (says Gorky). The alliance with Eng-

land is worthy of the greatness of the Russian people because it will lead to the union of the nations under the standard of the true spiritual culture of the mystical East. There are only two world Powers—Russia and England. And these two States have, as the foundation of their power, the lands and peoples of the religious East, rather than of the materialistic West. To these two is the problem of uniting culturally India, China, Japan. And when this union of the peoples of the mystic East takes place, the earth will be given ultimate liberty in peace. But for that end it is necessary that Russia keep true to her mission and establish her culture upon the mystical revelations leading to peace and love."

But Gorky bids these philosophers be undeceived. It is no use, he says, their getting rid of German capitalists simply to

make way for English ones. That was what English friendship meant. Such a book, for instance, as "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary" met with so much approval because in picturing us as holy lazybones and unpractical persons it allowed the English capitalist to rub his hands with glee, seeing in Russia a future British colony such as Africa or India. Whilst Russia is in her present state, friendship with any European Power must be the friendship of the earthenware pot and the iron kettle. Russia has to fight not for "ultimate liberty," but for the simplest civil rights as citizens. We must try to give the people education and try to train their will toward life.

No doubt Gorky makes an appeal in these words; and if the average Russian were asked what were the foundations of Anglo-Russian friendship apart from the

needs of the war, he would answer, Commercial exploitation. Trade, it is true, is put jealously forward as something to be captured after the war; but it seems a pity that Russians should not realise the depth, the sincerity of our interest in their characteristic religion, literature, and life. Whatever political tendency our interest may help, it is nevertheless true that England obtains from Russia spiritual help; and a great deal of that which Gorky condemns in his own nation is coming to our help to redeem us from commercialism and materialism. It is something of a paradox that the bright spirits of Russia should hate the melancholy vistas of Tambof and Kaluga and that the bright spirits of England should hate the gloom of Newcastle and Leeds, that one should look with love from England to the wandering pilgrims of Tambof and the other should sigh for the clamour

of wheels where "man at least is master." But paradox is tolerable where misunderstanding is not. For paradoxes abound in truth, and truth is made up of such paradoxes.

Later on in his essay Gorky remarks that stormy and revolutionary eras have produced great men, and his first example is Shakespeare, who flourished "in the stormy time of Queen Elizabeth." But rather, they were "spacious days"; and great men, great thoughts are almost always born in spacious days, halcyon days, when the dove broods on waters. Strength is with calmness, not with noise and quarrellings and revolutions. The critics are probably right when they say, "Return to Art." Art is creative, whereas argument is generally destructive. And Maxim Gorky evidently wishes to create.

Maxim Gorky may be called the leader

of the *porazhentsi,* the people who believe in defeat. He has lately added to "Two Souls" and "A Letter to the Reader"—the "Letters of William Simpleton, a Knowing Stranger."[1] But it is what we call "half-baked." Gorky has read an enormous number of books since he tucked his blouse inside and became respectable, but it is difficult to see where he, or the reader, has profited. He does not know where he is.

[1] Published in *Lietopis* anonymously but generally ascribed to Gorky.

IX

RUSSIA IN 1916

I WAS in Russia at the beginning of the war and during the first months of conflict, and I witnessed the superb enthusiasm with which she rose to fight. Again I was in Russia last year, when, owing to the general shortage of shells west and east, Germany was able to turn her superiority to account by retaking Galicia and ravaging Poland, and I saw the humiliation almost amounting to despair of Russia then. And therefore returning once more to Russia in June, 1916, I could form a fairly just idea of the spirit of Russia to-day.

Last autumn, returning from Russia, I was bound to say I found Russia pessimistic,

and though it is really bad form to be pessimistic, personally I certainly felt so myself. But all has gone well in the intervening period, and when I reached Russia this year I found her remarkably cheerful. My impression is that the Russians have settled down to a long war. It may last three or four years more, but they do not intend to worry. After the period of depression they are brightly optimistic again. Perhaps some are too optimistic and rely on mysterious prophecies as to the war finishing by Christmas, or think that the German people will revolt and give us an easy victory against a divided kingdom. One thing may be observed: the great work of French and English on the western front is now fully reported in the Russian Press. There are on an average two or three columns about us in the Russian newspaper. The Havas Agency is quoted, the *Times*, the *Manches-*

ter Guardian, the *Westminster Gazette,* and other papers, very fully. It is possible for an Englishman in Russia to form a fair idea of each day's news, so the Russian also can grasp it. That is a splendid improvement on last year when we got only those laconic non-committal communiqués which our smart English journalists can cause to blossom with occult significance for our English newspapers, but which in very truth translated into Russian merely gave the impression that we were doing nothing.

Russia feels us closer. The distance across is not so great. Day by day every one feels that we are all working happily together for one end and with one interest.

The visits of the journalists and the parliamentarians to the West have also helped a great deal. The journalists wrote their impressions very fully and expressed themselves with great enthusiasm. Their

contributions on the subject lingered on throughout the summer. And now they are collecting their articles and re-issuing them in book form. Nabokof's "From Militant England" has already had considerable success. Lectures have also been given. The members of the Duma and the Senate came back imbued with our enthusiasm, Radical and Conservative alike, and what they saw of our work was luminous in debate. On the whole the Russians have become much more warm and friendly towards us. They are obtaining a better understanding of our ideals, our character and national determination.

After the defeats of last autumn there sprang up a sort of intellectual sect, the *porazhentsi,* people who believe in defeat. These held that Russia stood to gain more by being beaten than by winning—a conclusion that the Russian soul is more ready

to accept than we should be. Brusilof's victories seem, however, to have dissipated this doctrine for the time being, and the *porazhentsi* are little heard of this autumn.

Allied to this, however, has been a more important movement in favour of a self-dependent Russia. Why should Russia struggle out of German commercial bondage merely to fall into British hands? Why cannot she manufacture for herself, be enough unto herself in all departments? This sentiment has been very widespread. Russia has obtained the impression that the striving toward Russian friendship going on for many years before the war has been primarily with the idea of capturing Russian trade. Whereas as a matter of fact the impulse for friendship came first of all from literary and artistic England, then from England as a whole, and the business men were the camp-followers.

The question of Russia and trade needs very careful treatment in the Press. The phrase "exploiting Russia after the war" is obnoxious and almost devoid of real meaning. Many small merchants will be led to try and *exploit* Russia after the war and will simply burn their fingers. All trade with Russia must be carefully arranged on broad principles to benefit both countries equally as before the war. Russia is the great producing country of the world and she needs a world market for her products—that Britain can obtain for her and that will be for the health of Russia and of the world. In return we shall send much to Russia, but not haphazard, and not shoddy dump, I hope.

Russian trade of all kinds is in a bad way just now and it is a trying time for Russian merchants—especially when they read frequently in their newspapers "Britain's Record Month of Trade," and the like. I think

these joyful telegrams about our trade should be accompanied by an explanatory note to the effect that the greater part of that so-called trade is a matter of war materials and necessities. The figures really represent our tremendous activity in the Allied cause. War is a material waste, and every moment it is prolonged we lose heavily *materially*. And in this material sense we lose more than Russia loses. We have had more to lose. Our trade figures represent the height of our temperature in the war-fever.

Russia is suffering internally through the fact that she has had only two open ports of value—Archangel and Vladivostock—and she cannot import the manufactures she needs. The railways and the ships are needed for the transport of munitions and food for the Army. The Army comes first, the war comes first, and everything else must give way. The people in the background

have a real share in the privations of the war. Disorganisation amounts at times to dislocation, owing to war needs. But the Russians bear things cheerily. All manner of new economic phenomena appear, and the Russians try measure after measure to remedy the troubles.

Practically every man of military age throughout the vast empire is either fighting or training. Before the war many had used influence to avoid military service, had obtained medical exemption on the slightest grounds. But there has been a thorough revision, and large numbers have been recovered. You see the new troops marching and drilling on the open places of the large towns, in camps on the steppes, and as the train takes you through the country you see boy-Cossacks prancing about on their ponies and practising with their lances.

Russia is altogether in the war and for

the war. She is doing her utmost. And her spirit is good. It is well English people should feel that to-day. And from us should go out to this great people, suffering and struggling as we are, a great fellow-feeling of gratitude and generous affection.

X

RUSSIAN MONEY

BEFORE the war for £10 you received 94 roubles, but now you receive 150. Last year after the great Russian retreat the exchange stood at over 160, but banks refused to give more than a nominal exchange. And in order to stop traffic abroad and foreign speculation in Russian money it was forbidden by law for any one to take more than 500 roubles out of the country. Now, however, the new value of the rouble seems to have been accepted, and banks generally give the due exchange value. Although the rouble has slightly improved it is not anticipated that the paper money will ever regain its guaranteed gold exchange. Each

Russian note is in the form of a certificate that the State Bank will pay in exchange for it a certain quantity of gold. That certificate has little value to-day, and it is an open secret that the Government buys gold at a rate which assumes a lower value for the rouble. People who have hoards of gold coinage—and they are many in Russia, for the people are disinclined to use banks—are keeping their gold, and their action is justified by the privileges which are already accorded those who can pay the Government in coin. It is expected by many that at the end of the war the rouble will be assigned a lower gold value.

One obvious effect of the depreciation of the rouble has been that all real estate and material belongings have increased in money value. If you have an estate worth 94,000 roubles before the war, it is now worth 150,000 roubles, and you are lucky if your for-

tune was in this comparatively more real form, of land. People, on the other hand, who were in debt have found the actual weight of the debt diminishing as money lost value. This has been particularly noticeable in the case of people who have mortgaged property. Suddenly it has been possible to sell the property at a high figure, pay off the debt, and still retain an unexpectedly large margin.

My friends the M.s have long wished to sell their large house in Vladikavkaz, but have held its value at what was in the old days an absurdly high figure. People used to laugh when the price was mentioned. But this year, "as if by miracle," to use my friends' phrase, a purchaser turned up, agreed to their price and completed the transaction in six hours. He was pleased and they were pleased. "What sort of a man was he?" I asked. "Oh, a sort of a

Tartar," they replied. He made a long way the better bargain, for he understood to what extent the rouble had lost value. On the other hand my friends paid off a big debt with these depreciated roubles, and there also they gained.

The people who have made money by the war are busy buying land and houses. This is reproachfully called land speculation, but is in reality commonsense action on the part of those who wish to make fast their wealth. When I paid a visit to Kislovodsk in the Caucasus, an extremely popular watering place in the mountains, I found a perfect rage of buying and selling property, brought about by this elementary change in values.

The public are still exhorted to pay for their railway tickets in gold, but are less inclined to do so than ever. There is reason to believe that there are a number of

millions of gold coins being hoarded in the country. Friends have shown me their private supplies. When one reads of burglaries, there is often a mention of several hundreds of roubles in gold being stolen.

In the southern districts of the Empire German agents have appeared, offering 15 roubles paper for 10 roubles gold. In this way Germany is said to have collected a considerable amount of Russian gold. The traffic was discovered by the police in Russian Central Asia, where men were found to be carrying this gold into Persia and thence to Turkey and Germany in small hand-bags. Many arrests were made, including that of M. Poteliakhof, a rich Bokhara Jew and dealer in cotton, who was found to be deep in this nefarious trade.

Russia has no gold in circulation, but also she has no silver and no copper. Russian silver coinage became last year, at least in

popular estimation, worth its weight in silver, and people began hoarding it; copper also was hoarded, and after the retreat from the Carpathians there were a series of small-change panics in the towns in the background. Many shops were sacked because the shopkeepers refused to give change; people travelled free on the trams because the conductors could not change their rouble notes. On other occasions you were obliged to accept sticky postage stamps as change. Thorough Government action swiftly followed, and paper tokens for all the small coins were introduced. Postage stamps without gummy backs were issued for 10, 15 and 20 copecks, a shilling note (50 copecks) was issued, and slips were printed for 1, 2, 3 and 5 copecks. How filthy this money became may be imagined. People gave it to beggars saying, "I give you this not because I pity your state, but because the

money is so dirty." Still this new paper was accepted without riots, and the people soon realised that it was more convenient than "sounding" money, and that five roubles' worth of it could be put in a small purse without adding a considerable weight to one's pockets. Thoughtful people welcomed it as teaching the ignorant that money had no value in itself, but only as a token of exchange. To-day one never sees a silver piece in Russia. All is being hoarded.

Perhaps, however, the war and the substitution of paper for coin has taught some people to care less for money. The Russian word is *dengy,* which is really a Tartar word. Indeed, where money is concerned the Russian is a bit of a Tartar and loves to feel the metal between his hands. If a substantial sum is mentioned, he nods his head and exclaims, "That is money!" as if he could see it being emptied out with a

joyous clash on the table in front of him. Of course the people who see money that way always see it in small quantities. The Russian business man is crafty over small deals. I imagine his money sense fails him more or less in very large deals and financial operations. To the true financier money must be somewhat of an abstraction and high finance a sort of higher thought.

XI

WITHOUT VODKA, BEER, OR WINE

THERE is a great difference throughout the land, something unmistakable, and you cannot say that it is undefinable, you know at once what it is. Vodka has disappeared. Beer has gone. Wines are sold at the chemists' only on presentation of a medical certificate endorsed by the police. So far from relaxing, the liquor prohibition vigilance has been increased, and districts to which the Tsar's original *ukase* did not apply, such as Russian Central Asia, have been taken in. You see smart officers sitting down to a bottle of *citro,* and it is rather a surprise that they do not grumble. Male complexions generally are becoming less red.

As a result of over two years' temperance, violent crime has practically disappeared from whole countrysides, and when occasionally some brutality has occurred, the police have managed to bring to book not only the direct offender, but also the person who was secretly brewing the liquor. The spirit of peace has come into the industrial or mining village on the Sunday and Saint's Day, where formerly there were often scenes of outrageous public hooliganism on the part of whole populations. Money has increased in the pockets of the poor. There is a higher standard of living; butter is being spread on the black bread. Peasant families are enjoying the eggs which formerly they would have sold for the money to buy drink. One of the reasons given for the shortage of food supplies in the great towns is that owing to the fact that the peasants find nothing on which to spend their money

they will not sell their produce. Formerly they could buy vodka. Infant mortality is already very much on the decrease. On the whole, children seem better cared for, though Russian peasants are always inclined to be rather careless of these gifts of God. There is an outbreak of "fashions" in the village, and if you ask your cook or serving-maid she will tell you how cottons are being cut this year, though the details seem to have little reference to *modes de Paris*. There is a popular joke that the peasant women make a mistake in the word they employ for fine dresses. "Just look at the *snariadi* (shells) I am wearing," when they mean to use the word nariadi, a townspeople's word for Sunday best.

There would also be much new reading in the village but for the fact that for the peasant there is as yet a dearth of printed matter. Children are sent to cry out to

passing trains for newspapers, and one finds the wisps of old papers in one's carriage and throws them on to the wind. They are eagerly picked up.

It is noticeable that the people are more active, less sluggish, particularly in the towns. There is an unwonted amount of energy in play. The suppression of vodka is good, but it would be absurd to say that the energies unleashed are entirely on the side of good. The old Adam can express itself in many ways. The wrong impulse merely prevented is not excised, it breaks out in another place. There is more gambling, more unrestrained sexual sin. I suppose no Tsar's *ukase* could clean up the Nevsky Prospect or Tverskaya, or stop love affairs with other men's wives. But even if it could the sinful impulse would break out somewhere else with perhaps greater vigour.

I have been over thousands of miles of Russia this year, in town and in village, in the melancholy north and in the passionate south, and I can give authentic witness. There is no noticeable leak of vodka. Except in Archangel city, I saw no drunken man anywhere. There they were drunk with English whisky obtained from the boats in the harbour. The pilot taking boats out always expects a bottle of whisky as well as his three-rouble tip. All manner of people are, as a British captain expressed it, "bumming around for whisky." I believe it is now probable that ships bound for Archangel will only be allowed to take a limited supply in future. Poor thirsty Russians, one can easily understand the wiles of those who think they can get it at Archangel!

Shinkarstvo, or illicit distilling and sale, has, it is true, broken out, as M. Kokofstef

predicted when opposing the local option measure before the war. Alcoholic substitutes are prepared and sold in small quantities. There were several hundred prosecutions during the past year. But the police seem to have the suppression of this *shinkarstvo* well in hand.

Some incurables have taken to methylated spirit, eau de Cologne, furniture polish, and some have died in consequence.

My impression is that enforced temperance in alcoholic drink is going to be permanent in Russia—at least as far as the Tsar's reign is concerned. National sobriety is one of the ideals of the Tsar. It is not a temporary measure. Licences may be granted after the war on certain conditions, and the rich may have their wines again. But popular drinking is not likely to be re-established unless some business Government should ever get into power having big

alcoholic interests. But business governments are not likely there.

The chief gain to Russia from a military point of view must undoubtedly be held to be the great increase of efficiency in the nation. Their warm sociality always betrayed them heretofore. In Russian character and temperament the elimination of strong drink has not had the effect which it might be expected to have if introduced in this country. Here our efficiency, which is becoming higher than before, would probably be little affected by prohibition, but personal character and outlook on life would be changed beyond doubt.

I have had to answer publicly several letters on the subject of Russian Prohibition and I append one letter and answer as perhaps helpful generally. I am constantly asked to refute false statements concerning the sale of alcoholic liquor in Russia, but as

replies take time to write I feel that the many temperance societies might well establish vigilance committees to correct false statements. A reference to the Russian Consul-General in London on the subjects generally elicits a simple confirmation of what I write on the matter.

To the Editor of The Times.

"SIR,—In your issue of the 8th inst. Mr. Stephen Graham writes: 'No wine or beer . . . is obtainable in Russia except clandestinely, as at Archangel.'

"Mr. Graham's knowledge of Russia is admittedly unique; he may be able to explain, therefore, what is a puzzle to those who are interested in the subject.

"I take from your Russian Section of October 28 the following excerpts:

"*Page* 6.—'The Imperial Duma, while generally prohibiting the consumption of liquors containing alcohol, adopted an in-

dulgent attitude towards grape wine. On July 14 (27), 1915, the Government imposed upon grape wine a small excise at the rate of 1 rouble 60 copeck per vedro. In the case of grape wine, consumption amounts to 40,000,000 vedros (120,000,000 gallons).'

"Then, again, referring to mild beer:

"'This drink is supposed to contain not more than 1½ per cent. of alcohol, although it is manufactured almost without Excise inspection and might easily be made stronger. The breweries are earning big profits from the sale of this beverage, bigger even than their former profits from beer; the State itself gets nothing.'

"Again, in the Returns of State Revenue, page 14, there is given as receipts in 1916 from Liquor Excise, 41,322,000 roubles in 1916, as against 18,084,000 roubles in 1915.

"Again, on page 15.—'Profits of Liquor Monopoly, 503,904,000 roubles in 1916, as compared with 30,718,000 roubles in 1915.'

"Can Mr. Graham reconcile the total prohibition which he affirms now obtains in Russia with these excerpts, or are there some errors in the figures which can be explained?

"Yours faithfully,

"H—— S. K——"

"——,

"November 9."

The following answer was given:

To the Editor The Times.

"SIR,—It is quite profitable to consider Mr. K——'s letter because of the blurred notion of Russian temperance reform which is prevalent in this country. It is most important that whatever opinion we may hold regarding enforced temperance or other

questions, we should yet keep a clear picture of the current life of our Allies.

"I am now just six weeks back in England after a four months' journey in which I visited places so wide apart in the Russian Empire as Ekaterina, in the far north, and villages of the Central Caucasian range, in the south; and I stayed a while in Petrograd and Moscow, Rostof, Orel, and other considerable cities, and I can say by the evidence of my eyes that intoxicating liquor has disappeared. The only drunken men I saw were in Archangel. Officers to-day sit down to talk over a bottle of *citro.* In the restaurants you are given *kvas,* a sort of fruity ginger-beer, which in truth is not allowed to have more than 1½ per cent. of alcohol, and is in no sense a beer.

"The article in the Russian Section is by the Petrograd Correspondent of *The Times,* and consists chiefly of extracts from an article by the Russian Professor Migulin. I find the phrase in the translation is 'malt

beverage,' and not 'mild beer,' as Mr. K—— puts it; and I think it refers to a beverage something like birch beer as sold in America, a sort of empty symbol of beer taken not because it is pleasant but because one must order something with one's meals. It has no alcoholic reality, is sold in bottles, and is of a standardised taste and quality.

"As regards wine, it must be remembered that in the Caucasus, in Transcaucasia, and in Russian Central Asia there are wine industries, wine is the local popular drink, not tea as in Russia proper. This wine is usually kept in skins and sold in pots. There is also a bottling industry, but the export of this wine from these remote parts of the Empire to Russia proper has been prohibited except in cases of specially guaranteed orders.

"I believe British and American and other foreign subjects are allowed to purchase wine for their private use on the presentation of a certificate. Professor

Migulin appears to be advocating a State monopoly in the sale of wine on the ground that 'only on condition of a State monopoly would it be safe to allow the free circulation of grape-wine; otherwise under the guise of wine vodka will again make its appearance.' For the phrase 'grape wine' read 'grape juice.' Professor Migulin's figures are apparently incorrect—the population of Russia is not consuming a gallon of grape-juice per head in addition to what it drinks in the way of *citro, kvas, narzan,* birch beer, etc.

"As regards the revenue returns, may I make the following remarks:

"1. Although the sale of alcohol in the form of drink has been abolished, the manufacture continues in perhaps larger quantities.

"Enormous quantities have been exported to France for use in the manufacture of high explosives, and I do not need to say more than that on the head of the extensive industrial uses of alcohol.

"2. In the figures of profits of liquor monopoly are included (*a*) debts recovered; (*b*) sums brought in after the winding-up of big shops where the accounts were not simple; (*c*) sale of vodka in Russian Central Asia and Transcaucasia (lately prohibited in both these districts also); (*d*) sale abroad; (*e*) the sale in Government shops of Caucasian mineral waters, now very extensive.

"3. Under the heading Liquor Excise is included the tax on mineral waters, grape-juice, etc., tax on real wine in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, on wine specially supplied for foreign consumption, on wines allotted to chemists for medical purposes, etc.

"4. The great increase in the returns is due to the tax on non-alcoholic drinks and Government sales.

"5. In these revenue returns the classification and nomenclature is not scientific, and the primary intention is to give a rough guide to the figures of the Budget.

"I hope these remarks do something to clear away the doubt in the minds of students of figures and papers. For the rest I can only reiterate the evidence of my eyes—Russia is without spirits, beer, or wine, and, if I may add it, she does not feel in any way persecuted or tyrannised over because of it.

"Your obedient servant,

"STEPHEN GRAHAM."

XII

GAY LIFE

I WAS at Petrograd and also at Kislovodsk, which is a sort of Petrograd set in the midst of the Caucasus, Russia's greatest watering-place, a resort of the rich. As is commonly said, you leave your children behind when you go to Kislovodsk; they would only be in the way. Here turn up in these war years many who would otherwise be at Nauheim and Carlsbad or on the Riviera. It is a place of few conveniences, but it has an army of doctors, it has the springs, and it has "society." It was so crowded this summer of 1916 that people slept in passages, in outhouses, in ramshackle cupboards and bathhouse, and paid fancy prices for the priv-

ilege. Return seats in the trains were all booked for two months ahead, and but for "the loop-holes of escape" I should have been forced to stay in the Caucasus until the end of September.

Petrograd and Moscow being so desperately serious in tone, many pleasure-lovers decided to extend the summer season, and even to try Kislovodsk as a winter resort. There was lively speculation in rooms and *datchas* with a view to high prices reigning throughout the winter.

An unhealthy spot this Kislovodsk, the air of its little streets heavy with the odour of decay and dirt. It is in a valley and there are glorious moors and hills about it. But one never sees any visitor on the hills. The visitors keep to the leafy promenades in the park, within hearing of the music of the bandstands and in reach of the café and the ice-cream bar. The women are mostly

in white, but more coarse of feature than in most places in Russia—the faces of women on a low level of intelligence, of the sort who pride themselves on being "interesting" to men. They wear their diamonds in the afternoon. A lady was robbed of her diamonds in broad daylight in Essentuki, a neighbouring resort, and on being reproached for wearing diamonds in wartime, replied, "Where else should I show them except at the waters?"

The people who have made fortunes out of the war are prominent at Kislovodsk, and the emptiness of their gay life is an unpleasant contrast to the realities of the time. Not the cultured of Russia, these, not the noble and the wise, not the people who really are the nation! Yet enter into conversation with one of these commercial parvenus and you find boundless vanity and self-importance. "We are the people who

count in Russia," they say. Go into a restaurant and your senses will be lacerated as you see them all around you eating with their knives. The books they are reading are Artsibashef, Fonvizin, Verbitskaya. Ask about the real artists of Russia and they raise their eyebrows or express contempt. They are nearest to the class in America that invented the word "high-brow" and for whom commercial talent must go on manufacturing huge quantities of loathsome "low-brow" literature, art, music and drama.

Many people asked me about England, but I was obliged to say the spirit of England would not tolerate a Kislovodsk; we have nothing quite so shameless during the war. We have people who are profiting by death and destruction and calamity and sorrow, but public opinion does not allow these venal gains to be flaunted in this way.

At Russian theatres, as indeed in English

theatres at home, flippant and indecent farces, the theatres themselves going ahead of the people and leading downward. One thing we may generally surmise, comparing one side of the footlights with the other—the life of the people looking on is ten thousand times better than the life presented on the stage. The vulgar and cynical notions expressed by the actors and actresses are only regarded as curious or amusing or spicily outrageous by the people who have paid so much money for the doubtful privilege of listening.

I witnessed a three-act play, translated or adapted from the French, where there was the usual dressing and undressing on the stage and scampering about in undergarments. Suddenly the lady who had the most abominable part to play, in the midst of one of the most unpleasant parts clutched at her breast with her hand and

fell with a loud thud on the stage. Then the curtain came down. We waited. Presently out came a weedy-looking pale-faced commercial and made the following statement:

As Mme. A. has had a heart seizure we cannot continue the performance. The management, however, hope that the audience will not on that account feel a grievance or that the money ought to be returned. To-night's tickets will be available to-morrow night, when a substitute will be found for Mme. A.

At this there were angry shouts from all over the theatre:

"What is the money to do with it?"

"We don't want to see the wretched play again."

"How is her health?"

"Tell us how she is."

Some one else came out from behind the curtain and asked:

"Is there a doctor here?"

A young woman at once came up. But the audience left its seat and crowded forward towards the curtain asking angrily how the actress was. The actress was not a particular favourite. But the people cared, and what is more, they had been made ashamed by the callous but sincere statement of the management on the more important aspect of the interruption of the programme. Life on the stage and life, how wide apart!

Intoxication through alcohol has disappeared, and with it a certain amount of abnormal and bestial vice, but the world remains as evil and human.

Drink, as the porter in *Macbeth* said, is the great equivocator, it sets on and sets off,

persuades and then disheartens. The removal of drink has left men more restless —at least in the towns. Probably in the village the removal of all kinds of drink has been an unmixed blessing. But in the towns the roving eye of man has roved further. It is impossible to clear up the immorality of the towns by Imperial *ukase*. The Russian boy of the town is born into a world of more temptations and risks than the English boy. A great deal of disclosed Russian genius must be poisoned between the ages of twelve and twenty by certain social conditions which no one in Russia seems capable of making an effort to clear up. The Russian town of to-day is no doubt none too easy for the young woman, and it seems a sort of hell for the young man, a long burning and the worm which dieth not. Health, health, how to obtain conditions of health, that is the problem!

I was speaking to a somewhat famous Russian senator about the deportation of superfluous population from Petrograd and he said: "The decentralisation of our cities' populations is one of the things which are coming. Why should Moscow and Petrograd increase in size? They only do so at the expense of Russia as a whole. We have plenty of room for all——"

I strayed into various cafés in strange towns this summer and ordered my coffee and settled down to write parts of a long book on religion and life with which I was preoccupied all these months in Russia. I was generally intent to sit down and write out some idea which had occurred to me whilst I had been walking. One evening I found myself in a typical den—the long alley of a café with women on each side, painted, powdered, striking, their legs crossed or spread about the table legs, ciga-

rettes in their hands, half-finished glasses of coffee in front of them.

Down the alley came young men with flickering eyes and lips, now and then a leer, a sickly smile, a cynical or satirical grin. "This is the world," think the young men, "this is the gay wicked world where what should never be sold can be bought."

But they are wrong—it is only a wee wicked corner. The great wide world is sweeter, healthier.

XIII

OLD FRIENDS

I MET Alexander Alexandrovitch Beekof, the hunter of Archangel at Moscow. He had purchased three fine pictures by our friend Pereplotchikof, and they stood in his room in the Gostinny Dvor in wooden packing cases. Alexander Alexandrovitch stood me a lunch at Martianitch's in the Red Square on a meatless day—a merchant's restaurant where you may see many antique Russian types of merchants wearing knee boots and blouses and longish hair. We had a nice dish of fish-pie (*rastegai*) with our soup, and though no wine was available, the bill, as I saw, for the two of us was twenty roubles, and three roubles more went

for the tip. In that way war prosperity expressed itself. My friend had to spend many days in Moscow collecting boots in small parcels. As the Government allows no packing-cases with goods to be taken by train from Moscow to Archangel (I imagine fine art is exempted from this regulation), Alexander Alexandrovitch Beekof had to buy some twenty portmanteaus to take his purchases of boots back to his native city.

Pereplotchikof the painter is not very well. Heart weakness deprived him of the use of his legs this summer. He was confined to his bed and felt very wretched. I spent many mornings and evenings sitting and talking to him. The doctors say that vegetarianism has been too much for his constitution. One evening I brought him a quantity of rich honey I had come across in a little shop in Moscow. He was delighted

as a child, and honey he said was ideal food for him. In exchange for this gift he gave me an old cross which he had once picked up on a market stall.

Alexey Sergeitch came with me to visit Pereplotchikof one evening and was much touched to see the change in him. But we had a very lively talk of old days on the Dwina. Alexey Sergeitch is now a teacher of history in several secondary schools in Moscow. He has just published his first book, the fruit of some historical research, and he looks forward to writing other books of like character, so making a career in history. He has the directly opposite view to mine regarding Russia and we had many long and inconclusive debates on Church and State. His sister, Varvara Sergevna, is nurse in an immense military hospital on the Volhonka. I spent an evening up till midnight with her, helping to cut rolls of

linen for bandages with atrociously blunt scissors. Russia has few machines for this work. Every night thousands of Russian girls are arduously cutting linen as we did with Varvara.

Nicholas, my first Russian friend, whom I met in London ten years ago and tried to learn Russian from, the boy who invited me to spend my first Christmas in Russia at his father the deacon's in Lisitchansk, is now settled down and married, and has a family at Kishtim in the Urals, where his knowledge of English has found him a place in the office of an Anglo-Russian mining company.

Nicholas and I lived with another poor student, three in a room, in Moscow—that was after the Christmas in the country. Our most intimate friend was a certain Sasha, a gaunt but happy student of philology. He used to bring stories and read

them aloud to our weekly student parties on Saturday evening. From him I heard first some of the stories of Kuprin and also Chekhof's Dushetchka or "Little Soul," which Mrs. Garnett has lately translated under the title of "The Darling" [1]—a famous story. Sasha has grown cold to Nicholas now, and I had lost sight of him, but the many references to my work in the Russian Press brought to his mind the idea that the Englishman he once knew was the same as the one now so well known. So he wrote to me, and I tried to see him this summer—married now and in good circumstances, working in the Russian Foreign Office.

Julia, of whom I wrote in "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary," as a type of a Martha, has had a year of pain, caught erysipelas from a servant, and this devel-

[1] "The Darling" by Anton Chekhof tr. by Constance Garnett.

oped into a sort of blood-poisoning. Sores appeared all over her body, and then one big sore threatening her with death; she has been, as it were, vivisected through the open wound all the summer, and felt that she herself must have cut up live animals for science's sake in some previous existence, and is now living through the animals' experience that her soul may really know what it means. She has been in terror lest her sisters should be infected from her and she has been afraid lest she should die and they be left without her motherly protection. Poor Julia! But I left her on a fair way to recovery. Little Lena is very well. The old lady, the Queen of Spades, is more frail and is suffering from the effects of a bad fall.

Varvara Ilyinitchna is much older, has lost a son, has had heart attacks, and is bound to take things more easily. Alexander Fedotch looks extremely well. The

daughter is matron of a small hospital, and has a wonderful time with her men.

Amelia Vasschevina, the old grandmother, has sold the white house, has paid her debts and has a large margin over. I fear, however, high prices will whittle her little fortune of ready money away. Her daughter Masha, the despair of all doctors, suffering from an incurable internal complaint which has been diagnosed as cancer, appendicitis, neuritis, inflammation of the solar plexus and what not, and for which she has had all manner of treatment and swallowed all sorts of medicine, has recommenced her work as a dentist. And though suffering agonies of pain she has the nerve to doctor teeth and smile at the lugubrious and fearful faces of her patients. Poor Masha, she has been cut open and examined and sewn up again, mesmerised, prayed into, and this last spring a miracle worker was

brought to consider her. He always carried about with him an Indian sword.

He said: "Don't tell me what you think is the matter with her or what the symptoms are. That would only make it more difficult for me." He came into her room took out a bit of glass from a waistcoat pocket, and looked at her face through it.

"You will live," said he, and he dropped his glass and went away. "But I charge you nothing," he added, and he brandished his sword as he went out at the door.

Loosha, of whom I have sometimes written, feels more happy than she has ever done before. What the secret is I do not know. But she has begun to write poetry.

Katia of Kief married the young lawyer. He was taken for the war, but the family used influence to bring him back to a safe job in the rear. I do not know what happened to discarded Boris.

Mme. Odintsefa is still keen on her evangelicals, and reads Spurgeon's sermons with the same enthusiasm as in old days she read Mrs. Besant.

XIV

RUSSIA'S NEW WAR PICTURE

RUSSIA has now a popular war-picture done by one of the most famous of her artists, Nesterof. It appeared during the past winter, and prints of it are now exposed in every city, postcard reproductions on every bookstall in Russia. It shows a wounded Russian officer standing beside a Russian sister of mercy. He is in khaki, and is decorated with the Order of St. George; she in white hospital dress. Both faces are marvellously expressive of suffering—the woman seems drowned in past suffering, and yet aware of the immensity of suffering that yet must come. The man has the vision in his eyes that makes it all worth while.

Her face is one of faith, his of vision. Together they express the ideal relationship of a man and a woman, he fighting the great fight, living life as it ought to be lived, she supporting him with her faith and her love.

Nesterof when he was yet a boy began to paint frescoes in churches, and has painted in his time many a wonderful Madonna and Child. In this picture where he has descended to paint just a woman and a man in the midst of daily life you may see a sort of suggestion of the Mother and Child, a reflection of some other composition, of some Russian Madonna and leaping Babe. Here also the man is really a child, though his eyes have the knowledge of the ideal and the quest, and the woman's face has purity and love and foreknowledge of the suffering that must come.

The background of the picture is Russia,

the green forest of pines and firs, the melancholy placid lake, the wan white church with its swelling coloured dome. Russia is in the background. Russia bore them, and their hearts yearn towards her.

So it can be a popular Russian war picture and be hung on many walls and looked into and loved in this strange year of grace 1916.

The words printed below are the famous lines of the poet Khomiakoff:

> The *podvig* is in battle:
> The *podvig* is in struggle:
> The highest *podvig* is in patience,
> Love and prayer.

I leave the word *podvig* because, as I wrote in my chapter explaining the word in "Martha and Mary," it is difficult to render it by any one word in English. But it is one of the most important words in the Russian language. Here possibly the nearest

word is "trial." It means a noble deed, an act of faith, a noble battle against fearful odds, a great sacrifice or act of renunciation, a shaming of the devil, a bold religious affirmation. Volumes might be written on it. The acts of the anchorites and hermits are *podvigs*. St. George killing the dragon performed a *podvig*. The seven champions of Christendom would in Russia be the seven *podvizhniks* and their heroic exploits *podvigs,* but there we have not a word. For performing *podvigs* Russian soldiers are decorated. But, as Nesterof tells us in his picture, there are the greatest for which there is no decoration.

> The greatest *podvig* is in patience,
> Love and prayer.

The sound of these Russian words is so beautiful in the original tongue that inevitably after you have read them you go on mur-

muring them till they are yours—a possession of the heart:

Podvig yest ee f srazhenie:
Podvig yest ee f borbay:
Veeshy podvig f terpenie,
Liubvy i molbay.

This is not absolutely correct transliteration, but I have written in the hope that it may be easier to say.

This picture is true for Russia and will be valuable long after peace has come as a historical witness of the spirit of the time. In the war, despite all its ugliness and accidentoriness, human nature is revealed as more beautiful, more daring, also more tender. The Russians have this picture, and we also have the reality. There is a strong spiritual life manifest among us. It is manifest in the faces of the soldiers and in the life of their anxious and loving women they leave behind. Will not some one paint it for us?

XV

IN THE HOSPITAL

I VISITED several hospitals in Moscow, Rostov, and Petrograd. Those in the north had not many wounded, those in the south had the men who had been hurt in Brusilof's advance. Russia looks her best in hospital where the men are suffering not only for Russia but for us, where the appearance of the men has the idealisation of hospital dress, and the transfiguration of care. There is no more sweet possession for a woman than a hospital where tenderness and love may be lavished and patience given without end.

Russia has had generally more wounded than any other nation, and the arrangements for the receipt of the wounded have been

wonderful all the time. Despite a national incapacity for organisation, the wounded have not died for want of care and forethought. In that speaks the Russian compassion and love for suffering humanity. The nursing of the wounded is an endless tale of personal devotion.

Several of my Russian women friends are in hospitals, and I visited them and talked to the soldiers, heard all the tales of their prowess. Surprising what a number of boys there are among the wounded, young fellows of thirteen or fourteen who have managed somehow to get into the Army. It was difficult to know how to address them—as boys or as men.

I visited the Anglo-Russian Hospital at Petrograd one evening, and saw how our English sisters have become friends with the simple Russian lads, sit at their bedside with dictionary and notebook, and carry on de-

lightful and pathetic conversations. The Russian authorities will not allow a wounded man to leave until he is well enough to return to his unit. The consequence is that the wounded man remains longer in a hospital in Russia than he would in a similar hospital in England. And the longer they stay the better are they known to those who tend them. The English in the hospital on the Nevsky at Petrograd obtain a fair notion of the character and temperament of the Russian soldier. My impression was that they admired and loved him greatly. He was all that had been written of him and said of him, and something more—religious, simple, brave, patient, cheerful, and sociable. Jolly boys these Russian wounded, not dour like Cromwell's soldiers although they are as religious as his, not Puritans, not intolerant. No one asks suspiciously of the sister nursing him,

"Are you not perhaps a Protestant?" And then feels suddenly, "I am saved and she is damned," but a general feeling that God's mercy is needed more for the poor suffering soldier than for the bright angel who is nursing him.

When our women were on the point of going out to Russia to work in this Anglo-Russian Hospital I confess I felt a doubt as to whether they would not find fault when they got to Russia and dislike the Russian Tommy because he was unlike his British brother. But I was wrong. The Russian peasant is convincing when you see him day after day, and it is your lot to tend him whilst he is suffering. Singing their national songs and their national Church music in those good choruses which without selection any hospital affords, you hear the voice of Russia with your ears be they keen or dull, and dressing wounds and watching

you see character. Undoubtedly if the same party of British nurses and doctors were thrown simply into the midst of ordinary educated men and women in Petrograd or Moscow instead of being given to the wounded they might easily come away with a less true impression.

But here amongst the men suffering for you and me and all of us is Holy Russia, which was and which is.

A considerable amount of spiteful nonsense is written against the notion of Russia conveyed by the term Holy Russia, and I among others am blamed for idealising Russia, or as Mr. Zangwill puts it, of Ruskinising her. And another Hebrew writing under an assumed name finds fault with me because I said at the National Liberal Club, "Love Russia, and do not distrust her as you have done in the past." Another Russian Jew, who has been embittered by

political treatment writing also under a pseudonym, pursues a violently misrepresentative campaign in Russia against the conception of Russia as a country that can be spiritually helpful to us.

How bitter these other friends of Russia are! They are those who have suffered through political disabilities; they are those, who not being Christian cannot be expected to be touched as we are; they are those who would prefer to see in Russia a free but non-Christian democracy as in France; for that end they are political revolutionaries.

Holy Russia is a living fact. And if it had ceased to be, study of Russia would be merely history and archæology. Nietszche said to German women, "Hope that your child may be the superman—the antichrist —hope that he may be a Napoleon." The covenant to Russian women and to our women is "Hope that your child may be

the Christ-child." It is the Christian thing which Russia has to give, and may God help the Christian background of Russia to shine clear to Europe. If Russia were merely Sturmer, Protopopof, Gorky, Rubinstein (the finance manipulator), Reinbot (who organised the police graft of Moscow), Rasputin (the debauched Siberian), Sukhomlinof (who is at rest in the fortress of Peter and Paul), Masoyedof (who was hanged for betraying Russia), Azef, Milyukof, Kerensky, Count Benckendorf, etc., etc., how little interest she would have for us!

If the crassly selfish, materialistic, middle-class of the Russian towns were Russia, who would stir one little finger to be friendly with her, except simply our commercial people who see that money can be made in Russia?

No one has shown more unsparingly the

dark side of the Russian life than I have in my books. In describing the pilgrimage to Jerusalem I described the exploitation that I saw. I have perhaps even gone too far in describing the uglinesses of modern Russia (in "Changing Russia"). But I do believe in Holy Russia, and as far as Russia is concerned do not care for anything else. I hate to see her being commercialised and exploited, and to see her vulgar rich increasing at the expense of the life-blood of the nation. Without any question the new class of middle-rich coming into being through Russia's industrial prosperity is the worst of its kind in Europe. They are worse than anything in Germany, and it is they who are beginning to have the power in Russia. It is the green and inexperienced who think that power wrested from the Tsar and his Court is grasped by the idealists of Russia. It is grasped by the cap-

italists and often by the foreign capitalists.

Poor Russia, she has not many faults, she has only many misfortunes. I am asked to discount Holy Russia and set off various things against it. The Russians steal—well, they did not steal in the villages till the railway came, bringing the thieves. And where there are no railways now there are no thieves. They lie—that is a matter for psychological inquiry. They do not lie as we lie. They are cruel. So are we all, but the Russians are tender also. Tenderness is their characteristic. What else is there to say against the Russian peasant? He does not work enough.

Well, grant everything, admit all that can be said against him, and subtract all from Holy Russia. I am not afraid to do it. I have had to do it long ago for myself. And there still remains Holy Russia, the beautiful, spiritual individuality of the nation.

XVI

THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

THE year 1916 closes in peace discussion. There has always seemed to me to be a likelihood that the war, the khaki and the guns, the gallant men and the sacred graves alike would be snowed over with papers and eventually almost lost sight of. Some eloquent German pastor cried out in a war sermon—

"White snow, white snow, fall, fall for seven weeks; all may'st thou cover, far and wide, but never England's shame; white snow, white snow, never the sins of England."

Our attitude would be rather: Never the sins of Germany. But even they must be

covered at last. And the snow which the pastor asked for has begun to fall, blown by a somewhat gusty westerly wind.

It is America that is sending it across and I imagine that Americans would be specially interested what Russians think of the prospects for peace.

The problem of peace as it affects Russia differs somewhat from the problem as it affects France and Britain. It is weli to keep in view the central facts.

Germany made war on Russia and showed herself ready to sacrifice Russia on the altar of her own greatness. The Kaiser so far from being on friendly terms with the Tsar, set out to despoil the Tsar of tracts of territory. Russia being an autocracy much more depended on the Tsar and his ministers than on the Duma or the voice of the people manifested in the press. He answered War with War. As far as can be

ascertained no attempt was made by so-called "Germans at court" to stave off war or make a pact with Germany and sacrifice France. Several large German landowners sold their estates and returned to the Fatherland before the war broke out, for they knew the cash was coming. Germany did not wish to come to an understanding with Russia before July, 1914. Germany thought it more profitable to sacrifice the Russians than to share with them power in Europe.

The German people confident in the possession of an enormous armament and of a genius for organisation which put them first and the rest nowhere, despised Russia. Russia's friendship was not worth striving to obtain. There were admirable foundations for building a German-Russian friendship of a most lucrative kind, deep German roots in finance, commerce, government and ad-

ministration and blood ties and inter-marriages amongst important German and Russian families, but it was thought to be more profitable to fight than to be friends.

Doubtless a German victory would have increased the profits of many pseudo-Russian merchant houses. But from the Imperial point of view it should be borne in mind that there is probably not the slightest doubt or vagueness in the Tsar's mind, and there has not been since the outbreak of war. The Kaiser has not only injured but has insulted Russia. There is a quarrel which can only be happily settled by the Germans being beaten utterly in the field.

The Russian people ratified the decision of the Tsar. There was a very great unanimity, doubtless revolutionary Russia was glad to be fighting for the same cause as republican France and free England. The war has been called all manner of things

pleasing from a liberal point of view, a war to protect small nations, a war against militarism, a war of progress against reaction. But fundamentally it is a quarrel. The press can say what it likes and theorists may theorise in terms interesting or not interesting to those at the head of affairs. But they for their part know one thing clearly, that it is a quarrel—it does not matter how people justify it to their consciences as long as they co-operate heartily in the great task of defeating the enemy.

The war, however, goes on a long time and there have been many blunders and scandals. The political extremists care for one thing more than for defeating Germany and that is for their political game at home whatever it may be. It has occurred to them—cannot the war be made the means of overthrowing the autocracy as such, by making ministers responsible to the Duma in-

stead of to the Emperor as heretofore. And since the Russian retreat of 1915 a large political game with important possibilities has developed. Political war of a kind has raged unceasingly and rages now.

This has played a little into German hands and had it not been for the complete, steadfast and unwavering hostility of the Tsar towards Germany, Russia would have succumbed to the seductions of internal strife. Germany as it is, hopes steadily for revolution in Russia—for a nation divided against itself cannot stand.

All through 1916 a rumour, however, has been persistently spread by word of mouth that the Tsar was likely to sign a separate peace. Every scandal that could damage the name of the Tsar has been repeated and magnified—the object being to obtain a transference of French and British sympathies from the Tsar and his ministers to the

Duma and the progressive parties in the nation. Such a transference of sympathy would naturally endanger the stability of Russia and play into the German hands—quite apart from the question of the future of Russian internal government and control

I cannot record here the gossip about Rasputin, Sturmer, the Empress, the falls of ministers. An immense amount of random rubbish is talked in Russia. Talking political scandal is one way of passing the time. The influence of Rasputin (a Siberian peasant and not a monk, not a priest, though he called himself Father and gave blessings) was greatly exaggerated. Some ladies took him up, as miracle-workers and magicians are taken up when they can be found. But he never had any influence with the Tsar. He seems to have been a curious character but he is now dead and the gossip about him will cease. I do not believe he

was working for Germany—as he had very little notion of what Germany was and could not even pronounce three consecutive words of his own language correctly. He was an obscure being and degraded even so. He prophesied that the Tsarevitch would lose his health if he, Rasputin, should cease to support him. I should say the boy's health would improve, now that the black arts have been removed.

Sturmer, the ex-Premier, was the most unpopular prime-minister Russia has had. He, happily, has gone. And in Russia they never come back.

The fall of Sazonof was a shock. The motive for his retirement is said to be the Japanese agreement which he arranged. It was also said to be due to disagreement over Poland. The British diplomatic body has undoubtedly leaned on Sazonof and would like to bring him back. Our diplomacy in

Russia during 1916 has, however, been in no way inspired. Its object seems to have been to play a political game, as at Salonika so at Petrograd, and to back the Duma at any cost. Buchanan has turned out to be an extraordinary speech maker; a contrast to the silent Russian Ambassador in London.

A cloud has been over the East obscuring it from our eyes. Happily however at the end of the year the cloud has lifted. Sturmer has gone. Rasputin is dead and Russia has announced clearly by the voice of her new minister and emphatically through the lips of the Tsar what she is fighting for.

The Tsar's message to his army before Christmas has more significance in it than many parliamentary debates, speeches of ministers or theories of theorists, and I leave it fittingly as the close of this attempt at a political elucidation.

It is now more than two years since Germany in the midst of peace and after secretly preparing over a long period to enslave all the nations of Europe, suddenly attacked Russia and her faithful Ally France. This attack compelled England to join us and take part in our battle.

The complete disdain which Germany showed for principles of international law as demonstrated by the violation of the neutrality of Belgium and her pitiless cruelty towards the peaceful inhabitants in the occupied provinces, little by little united the Great Powers of Europe against Germany and her ally Austria.

Under the pressure of the German troops, which were well provided with the technical aids to warfare, Russia and France were compelled in the first year of the war to give up a portion of their territory, but this temporary reverse did not break the spirit of our faithful Allies, nor of you my gallant troops. In time, by the concentrated efforts of the Government, the disparity of our own

and the German technical resources was gradually reduced. But long before this time, even from the autumn of 1915, our enemy was experiencing difficulty in retaining the territory he had occupied, and in the spring and summer of the current year suffered a number of severe defeats and assumed the defensive along the whole front. His strength apparently is waning, but the strength of Russia and her gallant Allies continues to grow without failing.

Germany is feeling that the hour of her complete defeat is near, and near also the hour of retribution for all her wrong-doings and for the violation of moral laws. Similarly, as in the time when her war strength was superior to the strength of her neighbours, Germany suddenly declared war upon them, so now, feeling her weakness, she suddenly offers to enter into peace negotiations and to complete them before her military talent is exhausted. At the same time she is creating a false impression about the strength of her Army by making use of her

temporary success over the Rumanians, who had not succeeded in gaining experience in the conduct of modern warfare.

But if, originally, Germany was in the position to declare war and fall upon Russia and her Ally France, in her most favourable time, having strengthened in wartime the Alliance, among which is to be found all powerful England and noble Italy, this Alliance in its turn has also the possibility of entering into peace negotiations at such a time as it considers favourable for itself.

The time has not yet arrived. The enemy has not yet been driven out of the provinces occupied by her. The attainment by Russia of the tasks created by the war—the regaining of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, as well as the creation of a free Poland from all three of her now incomplete tribal districts—has not yet been guaranteed.

To conclude peace at this moment would mean the failure to utilise the fruits of the

untold trials of you, heroic Russian troops and Fleet. These trials, and still more the sacred memory of those noble sons of Russia who have fallen on the field of battle, do not permit the thought of peace until the final victory over our enemies.

Who dares to think that he who brought about the beginning of the war shall have it in his power to conclude the war at any time he likes?

I do not doubt that every faithful son of Holy Russia under arms who entered into the firing line, as well as those working in the interior for the increase of her war strength or the creation of her industry, will be convinced that peace can only be given to the enemy after he has been driven from our borders; and then only when, finally broken, he shall give to us and our faithful Allies reliable proof of the impossibility of a repetition of the treacherous attack and a firm assurance that he will keep to these promises. By the strength of these guarantees he will be bound to the fulfilment in

times of peace of those things which he undertakes.

Let us be firm in the certainty of our victory and the Almighty will bless our standards and will cover them afresh with glory, and will give to us a peace worthy of your heroic deeds, my glorious troops—a peace for which future generations will bless your memory.

NICHOLAS.

Postscript: 1915, 1916 and then *annus mirabilis* we are told. Wonderful things will happen in 1917. That means we hope and expect peace in 1917. Germany does also. The only peace possible, however, seems to be that of complete victory over the enemy. As a personal opinion I think it unlikely that complete victory will be obtained in 1917. It is also unlikely that a compromise peace will be effected. The bill against Germany is too heavy for the German nation to accept.

If instead of making a vague general offer

of peace in December, 1916, Germany had offered the *status quo* we might possibly with great humiliation and vexation have all accepted the proposal. I think we should not, but we conceivably might. But Germany and her allies would have liked to keep some of the fruits of their victories and they could not then offer *status quo*. In all probability they will offer it later but then it will be too late as it is too late now in January, 1917. The bill against the Germans grows more heavy every day and every week the war is prolonged. Our chance of victory over them at the same time seems to increase as steadily. Next summer when the Germans have been routed in France and Belgium and Poland—shall we be more likely to consider a peace that would be acceptable to the Germans? I am sure not. Will Russia be more ready? Certainly not. Rather the demands on Germany will have increased.

I do not write this urging more war or craving for peace, but rather as a commen-

tator. I am sorry for the Germans in a way. But I realise that in July-August, 1914, they chose a line of action from which followed a certain set of consequences if they failed.

We on the Entente side have not improved our cause. We have tried to fight the Germans in their way. We have seemed to behave abominably in Greece—have become entangled in an irrelevant political quarrel there. But then we have simply been doing the best we can, according to our ability. Not many idealists would rush to offer their life for our cause now and great numbers have lost interest in it. But the unsolvable quarrel remains. How long the war will last seems to depend chiefly on the length of time the German armies can hold out against the ever-increasing machinery of death and destruction which faces them.

XVII

HOME

BECAUSE of the regulations regarding taking printed matter in one's luggage I was obliged to post to London some thirty packets of books. Possibly by appealing to our Embassy at Petrograd I might have obtained what is called a Foreign Office bag and have been immune from censor revision. A considerable number of British subjects are accommodated in this way. But it seems to me to be an incorrect thing to do.

I had bought some dozens of pictures and ikons. I had precious manuscript which I should not dream of trusting to the post, and if it had been proposed to confiscate that manuscript at Archangel as I

stepped aboard I should have remained in Russia to save it. But I got through without trouble.

Our people at Archangel were extremely kind to me, and put me on a returning ammunition ship, and I went all the way to Britain in comfort and without change.

The boat was a turret ship, one of those with hollowed-in sides, constructed to evade the true charges of the Suez Canal, where the toll is according to the breadth of the vessel. It had been ten times a year through the Suez Canal for twenty years, and now for the first time in its history was in northern latitudes. The crew were shivering Lascars, tripping about in one garment and looking more like girls than men. Each and every one had received from the Government two warm suits of underclothing, woolly trousers, coats, and wraps, but these things were locked away in their boxes, and

you could not persuade them to wear one. For the Lascar is a real Jew in temperatment and has a passion foı selling clothes and chaffering over them.

We steamed out gently through the traffic and along the narrow channels of the many-mouthed river, and after some hours got clear into the White Sea.[1]

When we passed a buoy the captain, who was rather a character, would retire to his sitting-room, take up his concertina, and play "Land of Hope and Glory," the "Dead March" in *Saul,* "Ip-I-addy," and other favourites.

We sailed under sealed orders and did not sight another vessel except British war-ships and patrol boats till we were nearing Lerwick.

In the Arctic there was calm, and we re-

[1] Seven lines concerning mines and buoys excluded by Censor.

captured the light which was fleeting with the approach to the equinox. The evenings grew appreciably longer. It was cold, and the barometer was going down "for ice."

The captain and officers felt the cold badly, stamped to keep warm, and came in to meals with red faces and bright eyes. "If there is a Gulf Stream it ought to be warmer than it is," said the captain. "Do you believe in its existence?"

I could not give an opinion.

"According to the hand-book, there is," said the skipper. "It flows north-east, but a little note says 'it has been known to flow south-west.' Two and two make four, but they have been known to make five. All I can say is that if there is a Gulf Stream we are going against it at this moment and beating our engines. Our maximum is 11¼ knots, and we are doing 12."

It was touching to hear English coming over the water when we were hailed by British patrols.

"What is the name of the ship?"

"Glamis."

"What is your cargo?"

"Wood—and—flax. Wood—and—flax."

"Ah well, I can't attend to you now, you'd bettah drop your ankah."

At one point, to the great disgust of the skipper, we were stopped by a cruiser and some twenty mail-bags were sent to us. And we lost our steam. "They signalled us six miles away. Why couldn't they have said they wanted us to slow up for mails, instead of allowing us to come up at full speed, and then giving us 'Stop immediately' and making us reverse the engines and go full astern."

We were a lot of cheerful British grumblers. I was the only passenger on board,

and so got to know them all pretty well. Every man was a character in his way, and their remarks filled me constantly with mirth.

Our last three days were stormy in the extreme—regular equinoctial weather. The captain did not sleep, for the waters were, in his opinion, "too submariny." I put out my lifebelt and wrapped up my manuscripts in a waterproof packet.

"What will happen should we strike a mine or be torpedoed?" I asked of the captain.

"Unless the engines were blown up we should proceed as best we could on the injured ship," said he. He showed me what were the vital sections of the vessel.

"In any case we should not take to the boats except in the worst extremity," said he. "For the Lascars have no will to live and they would not row us far. We should

throw three dead overboard every morning, they so quickly lose hope."

At Lerwick we learned the name of the port for which we had to make. 'Twas Aberdeen, and as the captain shouted this to us from the boat in which he was returning from the man-of-war, all the officers rushed to look at their shipping almanacks to see what the tides were. We made out that we could just get in in time. And the vessel that night did the best she ever did.

Still we missed the tide and had to wait all day outside Aberdeen, and that was very tantalising. I had made up my mind to stay the night at a hotel, and then suddenly the Daylight Saving Bill made me an unlooked-for present of an hour, and it was possible to catch the 8.30 night train for London.

An extremely cautious Customs Officer

looked at my things, but said naught, and he insisted on my unpacking the samovar which I was bringing home. When he saw it, he remarked:

"It'll be something for taking pictures?"

He said this because I had put in the chimney a number of pictures and maps to keep them from crumpling.

The doctor when he came thought we might be detained in quarantine for a week. The captain had a sore throat. He must go to a hospital and have a culture of it taken.

"A lot of bally rot, I call it," the captain kept repeating, and tears were almost trickling from his eyes.

The doctor, however, let me go, and I sent a small boy to fetch a taxi. The taxi appeared at about 8.25 P. M., and I just got to the station in time. There was half a minute.

"Take it easy. you've plenty of time," said a porter to me, characteristically.

All my possessions were labelled, and the doors of the guard's pan opened in the moving train and accepted the extra bags. I sped along through a throng of women waving good-bye to soldiers, and got into a carriage as by miracle.

There for a moment I paused and considered.

What a contrast to Russian ways, the possibility of getting off by a train with such a hairbreadth of margin.

The contrast was flattering to ourselves.

Soon, however, came another contrast, less flattering. Two drunken men got in. I was feeling particularly tender to everything English, and could not possibly have felt critical or wished to grumble.

But one of the drunken men wanted to fight. He stood up and held on a minute to

the window-strap, looked at me vaguely, and exclaimed:

"I pronounce my ultimatio."

"What is it?" I asked cheerfully.

"Self-defence," he replied, and then relapsed into his seat with a bump.

So I was home. And all night long the train rushed on to London.

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